Willing Women: Wills as Constructs of Female Self-Identity in the Seventeenth-Century South-West (1625-1660)

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I certify that all material in this thesis which is not my own work has been identified
and that no material has previously been submitted and approved for the award of a
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Signature: ……

Abstract

This study investigates the wills of women from the south-west of England, written between 1625 and 1660. On consideration of 600 examples, the idea that women did not write wills because they did not have property is challenged, building on the work conducted by Susan James in her monograph *Women's Voices in Tudor wills, 1485-1603: Authority, Influence and Material Culture*. However, this study departs from the treatment of legal documents merely as historical sources and instead re-casts wills as instances of women's writing and autobiography.

Whilst the increased focus on women's writing has meant a rethinking of what constitutes the 'canon' and has led to a consideration of texts such as diaries and letters as forms of women's literary production, the notion of 'women's writing' has not previously been extended to wills. Here, it is argued that the acts of instituting a will and providing its content render women 'intentional' authors and therefore situate wills as literary artefacts. They are read in relation to other texts and material objects, including the representation of the act of will-writing in drama, funeral sermons, monuments, accounts of women's deaths and mothers' legacy texts.

In exercising authorial intent over their wills, women used the document as an instrument of autobiography, in which they not only reflected but also actively fashioned the self which they recorded. The property descriptions, the relationships which were recorded between testatrix and beneficiary, and the control ventured and presumed by the composer of the will in the distribution of their worldly goods demonstrate the active engagement of these women with the way they would be presented and preserved after their death. The desire to be remembered and memorialised through the bequests made is discussed, and it is argued that women manipulated timescales as a vehicle for repeated or continued opportunities to be remembered. Whilst, for most of the women studied, the will is the only existing document they wrote, the dissertation concludes with a case study of Lucy Reynell of Newton Abbot, Devon, which provides evidence to demonstrate in detail how the will could cooperate, in conjunction with other texts and artefacts, in a concerted campaign of self-fashioning and memorialising for posterity.

Contents

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Abbreviations and Conventions

TNA – The National Archives

Wills from Gloucestershire, Dorset and Wiltshire are digitised on *Ancestry.co.uk* and the reference number has been included.

Whilst, following normal convention, secondary material is attributed by the surname of the author, testatrices are referred to by their first name. Where reference is made to two or more women who share the first name in close proximity, surnames are given for clarity. Some names are recorded with variant spellings, and these have been retained (unless otherwise stated) by using brackets for additional letters. In some cases, women are given two names, and these have both been given, either linked by / or with the designator ‘als’.

In transcription, I have maintained abbreviations, superscripted letters, capitalisation, and italicisation, spelling and punctuation as in the original. Where the documents illegible or indecipherable elements, these have been acknowledged in footnotes. In the body of the text and footnotes I have used shortened titles of primary sources.

Introduction

> In the name of God Amen. I Grase Dolmands of Honiton in the countie of Devon being sicke of body but of good of memorie thankes be to God Doe make this my last will and Testament in manner and forme followinge ffirst I give my bodie to the earth from whence it came and my soule to Jesus Christ my Redeemer in hope of everlasting life through him which didd forme Item my wills is that Thomas Dolman of Lime Regis shall have all the land (blank) that I have in Lime soe that the aforesaid Thomas Dolman doth pay unto my executor tenne pound within three months of my death unto Richard Pomerie and Robert Pomerie my Executors of this my will Item I give unto Fides Salter my new wascot Item I give unto Mary Lucads a dowlas Apron unto her Daughter my best hat Item I give unto the widddow Michell my coat with slives Item I give unto Elizabeth Pomerie my cheste and box and all that is in them Item all the Rest of my goods I give unto Richard Pomerie and Robert Pomerie of Honiton whom I make my whole Executors of this my last will and Testament and hereunto I sett my hand upon the twentieth of August one thousand six hundred forty sixe The mark of Grace Dolmans The marke of Fides Salter The marke of Johane Pomerie.[1]

Grase Dolmands wrote her will in 1646; it was proved the following year. This legal document opens with confirmation of Grase's mental competence, introduces bequests in a list where each new gift is announced with the word 'item' and closes with her mark as well as those of the people who witnessed the reading of the will. From the document, we learn that Grase was from Honiton but owned land in Lyme Regis and that Thomas Dolman, the Pomerie family, Fides Salter, Mary Lucads, Mary's daughter and the widow Michell were part of her family, kinship or friendship circle.[2] We also learn about the things that Grase owned; along with the land, she specifies gifts of clothing and pieces of furniture, before leaving the residue of her estate to her executors.

However, the way in which Grase describes these things goes beyond inventorying her belongings. Her instruction that Thomas Dolman should pay her executors ten pounds for the land she leaves him demonstrates her awareness of the value of the property as well as a certain business acumen. Her gifts of clothing give us clues about not only what she owned, but how she felt about the items and the people to whom they were given. Her description of her "new wascot", "best hat" and "coat with slives" implies that she has old waistcoats, other hats and coats without sleeves and that these are singled out not only for their intrinsic value, but also an extrinsic one. They are separated from "the Rest of my goods", suggesting that they are special to her and, by extension, so were

[1] TNA PROB11/200/119.
[2] Variations in the spelling of names is prevalent in wills.

the recipients of the items. These garments had dressed her body and would now go on to clothe the bodies of her legatees, transferring them and her memory from Grase to the recipients. Her gift of a "cheste and box" serves to partially furnish her home, but the "all that is in them" is hidden, unknown, unspecified: Elizabeth may have known what she would receive, but we do not.

Grase is physically present in the original will, along with Fides Salter and Johan Pomerie, via the mark that she made to acknowledge its validity, and it is clear that it is her voice which was recorded. The will is littered with the personal pronoun – the 'I' who authorises the gifts – and the confused repetition contained in the phrase "doth pay unto my executor tenne pound within three months of my death unto Richard Pomerie and Robert Pomerie my Executors of this my will" suggests the verbatim transcription of her words, without the amelioration of the clerk. Neither has the copyist changed it, meaning that Grase's words have been conserved in the register. She may not have physically penned the will, but the intention to write and the sentiments recorded are hers and both have been preserved without emendation.

The form and language of the document clearly mark it out as a will, which the *Oxford English Dictionary Online* defines as:

> A person's formal declaration of his intention as to the disposal of his property or other matters to be performed after his death, most usually made in writing (but see NUNCUPATIVE *adj.*1, PAROL *n.* 1); commonly *transf.* the document in which such intention is expressed.[3]

This definition conflates two ideas, the 'intention' – an intangible, abstract notion – with the 'product' – the concrete document which is produced as a result of that intention.[4] In addition, the will as a document incorporates other definitions of the word: the "desire, wish, longing; liking, indication, disposition" of the writer.[5] It represents the "action of willing or choosing to do something" and the "intention or determination that something shall be done by another or others … an

[3] "will, n.1." *Oxford English Dictionary Online* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, June 2018) <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/229046> [Accessed 19 July 2018].
[4] The conclusion of the definition of 'will' reads: "Formerly properly used only in reference to the disposal of real property, thus distinguished from a testament relating to personal property; whence the phrase (now tautological, but still in formal use) last will and testament". Ibid. For an early modern explanation of the differences between the two, as well as a detailed exposition of the law and custom surrounding will-making, see Henry Swinburne, *A Brief Treatise of Testaments And Last Wills* (New York and London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1978) pp.1-14.
[5] "will, n.1." op. cit.

expression or embodiment of such intention or determination, an order, command, injunction".[6] In writing a will, a woman transformed her inward desires and intentions into a physical object and, where these documents endure, they record in a tangible way not only what the woman owned, but also how she perceived her property. The will adhered to certain generic conventions, but the extent to which these were adopted, adapted or omitted is part of the way women used the document to fashion their identity. Working within a proscriptive form, women were able to select and combine elements and to use them to project a sense of self which speaks from within the legal language. As a legal document, Grase's will allowed her to dispose of her property; as an historical document it allows us to glimpse material aspects of her life. However, it is also a text authored by a woman, in which Grase fashioned herself as a property owner, recorded her charitable intent (through her gift to "the widdow Michell") and sought memorialisation through her bequests. It is this idea of wills as women's writing which forms the basis of this study.

Early modern women's wills have received little dedicated critical attention, despite the increased focus on wills as an historical source and the development of the fields of women's writing, autobiography and law and literature, all of which have taken place over the past forty years. This study aims to redress the absence of women's wills in the scholarship, drawing together these disciplines, acknowledging the value of the document as a source of information about women's lives, but arguing that what was disclosed was not objective but subjective, selected and framed by the testatrix and that wills were therefore a product of deliberate self-fashioning, The will's primary function was the distribution of property, but the form both permitted and constrained women's participation in an activity which, I argue, was a literary one.

The only comprehensive study of women's wills is Susan James' recent monograph *Women's Voices in Tudor Wills, 1485-1603: Authority, Influence and Material Culture*, which is, in many ways, the starting point for my work.[7] James asserts that "[i]n a sense these testamentary documents provide a subjective summation of the will-maker's life experience, her sense of identity, her priorities and aspirations, her concerns for her heirs" and her focus on questions of

[6] "will, n.1." op. cit.
[7] Susan James, *Women's Voices in Tudor wills, 1485-1603: Authority, Influence and Material Culture* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015).

women's attitudes to will-making, their desire for "public post-mortem identity", their occupations, the distribution of property and the material culture with which they surrounded themselves are foundational to my study.[8] James' contention is that "[o]nly in their wills do we hear the voices of ordinary women" and she concludes that, despite the intervention of male scribes and the legal form, women's wills offer the opportunity to glimpse the lives of "not just the anomalous widow, the outlier spinster, or the singular aggressive aristocrat but an entire population of articulate, opportunistic, and capable individuals who found the spaces between the line of the law and used those spaces to achieve personal goals".[9] Like James, I hope to contribute to an historiography in which women have all too often been incidental and collateral. However, unlike James, I do not seek to corroborate what women had to leave, or to verify their lives as they describe them through recourse to inventories, indentures, legal apparatus or the writing of men, but to focus on how women wanted to be perceived and how they used their wills to facilitate this.[10]

James' conclusion that a wide range of women had access to, and used, the will as a way of writing about their lives, whilst entirely congruent with my argument, falls short of attributing to the testatrices the degree of agency which I would suggest the documents manifest, and fails to read them as literary endeavours through which women created their own meaning and drew their own lives. I read wills not only as historical documents, but, building on the work of literary critics, claim that they should be part of the widening array of texts considered to be women's writing. In doing so, I aim to contribute to our understanding about what constituted the act of writing and question the notion of the monolithic author. The ability to physically write a will – something which was rare even amongst literate testators – becomes an unnecessary consideration, and women are seen as 'intentional' authors, initiating, dictating and affirming the content as their creation.

Considering women as 'intentional' authors allows us to embrace, rather than dismiss, the polyvocality of the will. Whereas historians have argued that

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[8] James, p.2, 5.
[9] James, p.4, 8.
[10] That is not to say that there is no reference to men's writing. Edward Reynell, nephew of Lucy, wrote an expansive hagiography of his aunt which is discussed in some detail in chapter four in respect of the extent to which it reinforces the picture Lucy creates in her will and other texts which she left (Edward Reynell, *The Life and Death of the religious and virtuous Lady, the Lady Lucie Reynell of Ford in Devon: Who dyed the 18th of Aprill 1652 Whereunto is annexed A consolatory Epilogue for defected soules* (London: Henry Seile, 1654)).

scribal elements obfuscate women's intentions, I contend that the existence of multiple voices does not mean that the woman's is silenced. Like other scribally produced documents, such as petitions, composition may have been a collaborative endeavour, but it was one which foregrounded the woman's voice. Despite the formal constraints of such texts and the intervention of the scribe, I suggest that there was enough space and freedom within wills for the woman to construct and project the self with which she wanted to be associated. As a result, I believe that wills can be read as a form of life-writing which gave a woman the opportunity to fashion her own textual monument.

Wills are here read alongside other forms of writing by or about women, such as funeral sermons, accounts of good deaths and mothers' legacy texts. Finally, the inclusion of a case study of Lucy Reynell offers the opportunity to place her will in dialogue with the hagiographic description of her life and death written by her nephew, her portrait, household account book, charity constitution and monument and to see it as part of a concerted attempt to create a coherent image of herself which would endure beyond her death.

The Historiography of Wills

In 1974, Margaret Spufford observed that "wills are largely unused by local historians" in comparison to the inventories which accompanied them.[11] This situation has changed significantly over the past forty years, with historians using wills to explore a range of aspects of early modern life. My intention here is not to rehearse all of this historiography, but to examine those elements which have informed my reading of women's wills.[12]

One tranche of scholarship has focused on questions over the reliability of the document as a record of faith and the extent to which this was constructed by the scribe, rather than the testator himself. In 1959, W.K. Jordan confidently asserted that wills were "completely honest documents" which served as "mirrors of men's souls" and began with

[11] Margaret Spufford, *Contrasting Communities: English Villages in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), p.56.
[12] Nigel Goose and Nesta Evans offer a comprehensive overview of how wills have been used in 'Wills as an Historical Source' in *When Death do us Part: understanding and interpreting the Probate Records of Early Modern England* ed. by Tom Arkell, Nesta Evans and Nigel Goose (Oxford: Leopard's Head Press Limited, 2000), pp.38-71.

> a carefully considered and eloquently elaborated confession of faith, in which the testator earnestly strives to set out the nature of his beliefs, to confess his own inadequacies, to confirm his confidence in the mercy of God, and to prepare himself for a death which he believes to be imminent.[13]

Jordan's proclamation has, however, been widely challenged. The use of scribes – both clerical and lay – who employed formulations which were either their own invention, developed from others as local custom, or adopted or adapted from those contained in books such as William West's *Symbolaeographia* of 1590, has brought into question the reliability of commendatory statements as indications of personal piety.[14] Foundational in this work has been Margaret Spufford, who, through her study of wills written by identifiable scribes, concludes that, "unless he had strong religious convictions, the clause bequeathing the soul may well have reflected the opinion of the scribe or the formulary book the latter was using, rather than those of the testator". However, she acknowledges that it was likely that, even on the deathbed, a testator would have selected as scribe someone with congruent religious beliefs, and that it is possible to see exceptions in the wills of people with particularly fervent views.[15] Despite these caveats, Spufford contradicts Jordan, concluding that

> It is wrong for the historian to assume that if he takes a cross-section of 440 wills proved over a particular period, he is getting 440 testators' religious opinions reflected, unless of course the wills also came from 440 different places. Even them the scribe might have a determining influence.[16]

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[13] W.K. Jordan, *Philanthropy in England, 1480-1640. A Study of the Changing Pattern of English Social Aspirations* (London: Routledge, 1959), p.16. Given that, at this point in the historiography, the focus was on the wills of men, I use the term 'testator' rather than 'testatrix' in the following discussion.

[14] William West, *Symbolaeographia. Which may be termed the art, description or image of the instruments, couenants, contracts, &c. Or the notarie or scriuener* (London, 1590). West offers a choice of four formulae, although the most involved and expressively pious of the four owes much to the opening of Epaphroditus' will in Thomas Becon's *The Sicke Mans Salve* (London: Iohn Daye, 1577).

[15] Margaret Spufford, 'Religious Preambles and the Scribes of Villagers' Wills in Cambridgeshire 1570-1700' in *When Death do us Part: understanding and interpreting the Probate Records of Early Modern England* ed. by Tom Arkell, Nesta Evans and Nigel Goose (Oxford: Leopard's Head Press Limited, 2000) pp.144-157 (p.146). J.D. Alsop notes that formularies were "very readily available in inexpensive, popular almanacs by the mid-seventeenth century" (J.D. Alsop, 'Religious Preambles in Early Modern English Wills as Formulae' *Journal of Ecclesiastical History* Vol. 40. No. 1. (1989) 19-27 (p. 20)).

[16] Margaret Spufford, 'Religious Preambles' p.157. William Sheils likewise asserts that a testator would choose as their scribe someone in whom they had confidence, so that the wording used was likely to be that of the testator "even if at one remove" (W.J. Sheils, *The Puritans in the Diocese of Peterborough 1558-1610,* p.15).

This conclusion has been endorsed by other historians. R.C. Richardson asserts that, whilst useful as evidence of general trends in expressions of faith, the extent to which commendations represent the doctrine of the individual is more difficult to ascertain.[17] Rosemary O'Day likewise argues that, whilst it is possible to trace changes across the early modern period – from the traditional request for the intercession of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Holy Company of Heaven, through the non-traditional formulation which simply commends the soul to almighty God, to Protestant preambles which include a reference to the sinfulness of the testator and their reliance on the mercy of Christ for salvation – it is more difficult to confidently determine an individual's specific doctrinal position because of the intervention of a scribe or formulary.[18] She goes further, observing that "[f]ar from revealing the religious beliefs of the average testator, wills and their preambles hide them from the historian's gaze".[19] By employing an acceptable preamble, a testatrix might obfuscate her true beliefs with standardised wording, thus rendering her initial proclamation a mark of "deliberate religious conservatism or recusancy".[20] Susan James acknowledges the consensus that relying on preambles as clear indications of faith is misleading and, like O'Day, draws on other aspects of wills – the naming of children within the family; bequests of specific books which espoused particular doctrinal positions; monies to named ministers, or for particular acts of preaching – rather than the preamble as indicators of the beliefs of the testatrix.[21] Nevertheless, James' conclusion is that by the end of the sixteenth century, "a majority of preambles appear to express actual convictions, primarily in reformed religious

[17] R.C. Richardson, 'Wills and Will-makers in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries: Some Lancashire Evidence' *Local Population Studies,* Number 9 (1972), pp.33-42. Elisabeth Salter observes that "in some ways it is the very formulaic quality of these texts that permits glimpses of personal choice and individual perception. Deviations from the generic requirements or an embellishment of detail not obviously needed to fulfil the legal function provide this betrayal" (Elisabeth Salter, *Cultural Creativity in the Early English Renaissance* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), p.12).

[18] Rosemary O'Day, *The Debate on the English Reformation* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2014) p.517. For a discussion of these developments, see M.L. Zell, 'The Use of Religious Preambles as a Measure of Religious Belief in the Sixteenth Century' *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research,* Vol. 50. Issue 122 (1977) 246-249; Alec Ryrie, 'Religion and religious change', in *Understanding Early Modern Primary Sources* ed. by Laura Sangha and Jonathan Willis (Oxford: Routledge, 2016), pp.170-186. Even in the seventeenth-century, 'traditional' formulations were sometimes used: Mary Meredith and Joan Bull, for example, include reference to "the company of the holy angels and saints" in their preambles (TNA PROB11/201/216; PROB11/213/562).

[19] O'Day, p.517.

[20] O'Day, p.517.

[21] James, p.21.

dogma" in which women's expectation of salvation through the death and passion of Jesus Christ is expressed.[22] However, whilst she offers evidence that the ideas contained in the commendation are supported by evidence from the remainder of the will, she does not offer examples where there is a discrepancy between the two.

The idea that the use of a trained scribe meant that wills often reflected "scribal fashions (and idiosyncrasies) in the ways that they were recorded" has certain limitations.[23] Firstly, it relies on our ability to determine who actually wrote the will, something which, as, Christopher Marsh observes, it "has frequently proved impossible to establish".[24] Spufford's work is based on the wills produced by identified scribes, but her conclusion that only where the testator had strong religious beliefs are their words heard, ignores the possibility that minor inflections might have been made at their behest, rather than at the discretion of the scribe, thus reducing the agency of the testator.[25] Ralph Houlbrooke suggests that people may have been offered an element of choice over the exact wording of the preamble, which could explain variations within the oeuvre of a particular scribe and indicate some discussion between the scribe and the testator, an idea which will be explored in chapter two.[26] Marcia Pointon goes further, warning that it is important for scholars to hear the testator's 'voice' within the "complicated network of relationships between people, objects and entitlements" contained in the will, including the preamble.[27] In addition, the focus on scribal influence ignores the fact that wills were not always written by trained scribes, with, as Spufford acknowledges, amateur but literate members of the local society being

[22] James, p.21.
[23] Jonathan Willis, 'Ecclesiastical Sources' in *Understanding Early Modern Primary Sources* ed. by Laura Sangha and Jonathan Willis (Oxford: Routledge, 2016), pp.58-77 (p.70).
[24] Christopher Marsh, '"In the Name of God?" Will-Making and Faith in Early Modern England' in *The Records of the Nation* ed. by G.H. Martin and Peter Spufford (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1990), pp.215-249 (p.216). Marsh also points out that, no matter the extent to which the commendatory phrase actually expressed the belief of the testator, they were routinely copied into registers unamended ('Attitudes to Will Making in Early Modern England' in *When Death do us Part: understanding and interpreting the Probate Records of Early Modern England* ed. by Tom Arkell, Nesta Evans and Nigel Goose (Oxford: Leopard's Head Press Limited, 2000) pp.158-175 (p.167)).
[25] Spufford, 'Religious Preambles', p.153.
[26] Ralph A. Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion, and the Family in England, 1480-1750* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988), p.126.
[27] Marcia R. Pointon, *Strategies for Showing: Women, Possession, and Representation in English Visual Culture, 1665-1800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p.142.

employed to write them, and that, although rare, there are wills written by the testator himself which nonetheless employ standard formulaic preambles.

These opposing stances – exemplified by James' insistence that the 'I' represents an individual voice and Becker's contention that the use of "boilerplate preambles, scribal influence, or other outside pressures" mutes it – deny the polyvocality of the will and diminish the testatrix's agency in producing it.[28] It could be argued that the 'I' of 'I give' is the testatrix's voice, whilst the phrasal verbs and anaphoric references belong to the legally trained scribe, but this denies how women's experience of wills – as beneficiaries, as executrices, as witnesses – exposed them to the accepted language of the document and allowed them to participate as co-author. As Robert Houston asserts, "it is best to think not of one literacy, but of several literac*ies*, of a variety of ways in which the products of a culture can be acquired and transmitted"; Amanda Whiting, in her discussion of women's petitions, similarly maintains that women's familiarity with the form allowed them to participate in their production.[29] This position challenges the notion of the monolithic 'author' and allows for a co-creative endeavour which goes some way to explaining why the will of Ann Doddington, written "with mine own hand", and the drafts of a will produced by Elizabeth Ducie still conform to the expected language and form.[30] Where other women used scribes to record their words within a legal format, these women wrote their own wills, but used a culturally acquired legal language to frame their documents.

Attempts to determine the extent to which a will was the product of the scribe or of the testator have read wills as static, completed artefacts and have seen their composition as a one-way process, with the testator dictating and the scribe transliterating into an accepted form. This approach has thus ignored the collaborative and oral nature of producing a will, discounting the conversations which would have taken place around the process and which can be heard in the muddled order of bequests, the forgotten and then remembered beneficiary and,

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[28] James, p.6; Lucinda Becker, *Death and the Early Modern Englishwoman* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), p.152.
[29] Robert A. Houston, *Literacy in early modern Europe: Culture and Education 1500-1800* (Harlow and New York: Longman, 2002), p.3; Alison Whiting, *Women and Petitioning in the Seventeenth Century English Revolution: Deference, Difference, and Dissent* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2015), p.27.
[30] TNA PROB11/198/256; Gloucestershire Records Office D340a/F1. There is no record of Elizabeth's will being proved, but there is a petition on behalf of one son, requesting that the king resolve a dispute between him and his brother. Ann Doddington will be discussed further in chapters two and three.

in places, in the recorded voices of others present at the deathbed. Wills were also performative documents. They were read aloud to the witnesses who acknowledged that they had heard them, something which seems to have been largely overlooked in the historiography. Writing a will meant directing a scribe, inviting an audience, rehearsing a dialogue – complete with prompts and asides – and hearing a performance; reading the final document as an historical record reduces this dynamic process to a stagnant one, freezing the product in time and consequently diminishing the agency of the testatrix by hiding their contribution to it.

Another area of will-making which has attracted the attention of historians is its use as a vehicle for making and recording charitable bequests. Although the Reformation saw the end of deathbed giving as a means of ensuring salvation, and espoused that benevolence shown during life was more meritorious than that shown at death, wills continued to contain gifts to the poor, and these have been used to examine the affective relationships which people had enjoyed with others and the desire of testators to contribute to the maintenance of society.[31] W.K. Jordan, for example, claims that there was a growth of charitable giving through the Elizabethan period and on to the 1640s and that this had "repaired the damage society had sustained from the slow ruin of the Middle Ages".[32] His conclusions have, however, been strongly disputed.[33] J.F. Hadwin's work sought to adjust Jordan's calculations, and Nigel Goose and Nesta Evans draw attention to the limitations of Jordan's methodology, not least the fact that his work failed to fully explore the charity of women or the ways in which their giving differed from that of men.[34] These differences include gifts left to groups of widows and named women, positioning the testatrix within sororal communities, and, as James notes, in relation to individuals "known personally to the will-maker herself".[35]

Although James notes a diminution in bequests left for the upkeep of community infrastructure such as highways and bridges by the seventeenth-

[31] Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion,* p.135.
[32] Jordan, p.240.
[33] Goose and Evans in fact describe criticism of Jordan's work as "a veritable industry" (Goose and Evans, p. 51).
[34] J.F. Hadwin, 'Deflating philanthropy' *Economic History Review,* 31 (1978), 105-117; Goose and Evans, p. 53.
[35] James, pp.50-51.

century, my research indicates that women did still leave money for civic projects like schools, almshouses and hospitals.[36] For example, Cicilie Gunning of Bristol bestowed:

> forty shillings more part of the eight pounds interest which shall so arise and come by the said stock of money to be given and allowed by my overseers for the keeping the conduit or water pipe in the said parish clean and in good order and not suffereing any watering tubs or vncleane vesselles to be formed, used or stand in or about the same or any halyards vates to be filled there at or by the said conduit or pipe over that the chamber of the citty or any officer for the same shall neither meddle with the said man so elected nor any way dispose of the fortie shillings so to him allowed for such his attendance and paines to be taken therein.[37]

Reading this bequest as either an affirmation of Jordan's charity as remedial, or as an anomaly in James' perceived absence of such bequests in the 1600s fails to engage with the more nuanced ideas at play in Cicilie's gift, as well as those of other women. Cicilie uses her will to not only make provision for the maintenance of the conduit, but also to assume the right to intervene in material practices within the community. She imposes conditions on the charity she gives, disbarring "vncleane vesselles" and "halyard vates" and, in her injunction that neither the "citty or any officer for the same shall neither meddle" with her appointee, she presumes the right to dictate terms and to expect that her instructions will be followed. The contingency of Cicilie's bequest reflects the authority her will gave her to involve herself in municipal affairs, allowing her to transcend gendered expectations of charitable giving and to exert her influence from beyond the grave.[38]

Charitable gifts are not the only financial undertakings which historians have charted through women's wills. The majority of testatrices were widows and this status often made them financially independent. As a result, as Amy Erikson notes, wills offer insight into the lives of widows across the geographical and demographic range.[39] The lives recorded demonstrate that, within urban society, and especially amongst the middling ranks, widows, rather than being isolated or impotent, were significant members of society, who contributed to the local economy as money-lenders, supplying at least some of the credit "which peasant

[36] James, pp.55-7.
[37] TNA PROB11/161/251.
[38] The idea of contingent civic charity will be further explored in chapters two, three and four.
[39] Amy Erikson, *Women and Property in Early Modern England* (London: Routledge, 1995), pp.204-5.

and small-town societies needed so extensively in seventeenth-century England".[40] Whilst, as Judith Spicksley contends, women in the seventeenth-century were willing to lend capital to commercial enterprises on the same terms as men, the women in this study lent to family and friends, rather than to businesses.[41] Elizabeth Pomeroy of Newton Abbot, for example, leaves "three pounds of good and lawful money of England which Mr Robert Forrys now hath" to her daughter-in-law, naming her son as executor to retrieve it.[42] Nathaniel Boucher owes Anne Warren five pounds and has received a "firkin of butter in adventure" from her and, if her executor can recover a second debt, then the money is to be split between him and his brother.[43] The will of Jane Bryant hints at a more professional arrangement, referring to the "dozen of silver spoons and a diaper table cloth" she had of "Brewers daughter of Bedminster" who "hath five pounds upon them".[44] The keeping of the spoons in pawn for the money might have put the loan on a more business-like footing, but it was still a domestic agreement. These women's financial enterprises were familial and familiar, supporting the people that they knew, accounting for their loans at their death and ensuring that their money was recovered and redistributed.

The ability of women to engage in such pecuniary arrangements depended on "how much of the family wealth her husband had left to her", and the use of wills as a mechanism for property distribution is another area which has concerned historians.[45] Whilst men tended to bequeath the majority of the family estate, usually to their eldest son, they left their widow a portion so that she did not become a burden on society.[46] What this portion amounted to varied: sometimes it was based on dower or jointure, but sometimes on the generosity of the husband, or the circumstances of the family left behind. Anne Goddard had

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[40] Mary Hodges, 'Widows of the 'Middling Sort' and their Assets in Two Seventeenth-Century Towns' in *When Death do us Part: understanding and interpreting the Probate Records of Early Modern England* ed. by Tom Arkell, Nesta Evans and Nigel Goose (Oxford: Leopard's Head Press Limited, 2000) pp.306-324 (pp.310-11).
[41] Judith Spicksley 'Usury Legislation, Cash and Credit: the Development of the Female Investor in the Late Tudor and Stuart Periods' *Economic History Review* 61:2 (2008) 277-301, p.301.
[42] TNA PROB11/220/719.
[43] TNA PROB11/183/519.
[44] TNA PROB11/212/211.
[45] Sara Mendelson and Patricia Crawford, *Women in Early Modern England 1550-1720* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), p.197.
[46] Jeff Cox and Nancy Cox 'Probate 1500-1800: a System in Transition' in *When Death do us Part: Understanding and Interpreting the Probate Records of Early Modern England* ed. by Tom Arkell, Nesta Evans and Nigel Goose (Oxford: Leopard's Head Press Limited, 2000), pp.3-37 (p.23).

received all of her husband's property when he died and she passes it on to her young son.[47] Maud Hobb of Bodmin leaves her son twenty shillings as her opening bequest before distributing the remainder of her property amongst her daughters.[48] Her son had presumably received property in his father's will; Maud's bequest was a token, a way of remembering and recording him in her will, but her main concern was to ensure that her daughters were provided for.

Maud's distribution of her property reflects the gendered nature of bequests observed by historians. Both Lucinda Becker and Martha Howell, for example, observe that women's gifts of their own personal items served not only to leave their legatees things of intrinsic value, but also to cement relationships which had existed in life.[49] Jane Whittle and Elizabeth Griffiths concur, arguing that "wills are one of the few sources in which we can observe people using their goods to create meaning".[50] The things women left were frequently described in ways which recorded how they felt about the object and thus imbued it with an extrinsic value which transcended its monetary worth.[51] The use of the possessive determiner 'my' to describe objects was not unique to women, but its presence created an affective link between the testatrix, the object and the recipient and the designation of things as 'best' or 'lesser' established a hierarchy of items and, by association, of legatees. Even the fact that specific pieces of plate, clothing or linen were separated from the 'rest' marked them as significant to the testatrix. When Maud Hobb leaves "one brewing pann called by the name of hodges pan Also another pan called the blacke pann" to one of her daughters, her descriptions erve not only to distinguish between the individual pans, but also speak to a shared understanding of them and evoke past associations through the descriptors.[52] The recording of individual pieces creates a quasi-inventory within the will, but where an inventory allows the historian to reconstruct the material circumstances of a woman's life, the will alludes to her own feelings

[47] TNA PROB11/255/321.
[48] TNA PROB11/252/441.
[49] Lucinda Becker, *Death and the Early Modern Englishwoman* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), p.154; Martha C. Howell 'Fixing Moveables: Gifts by Testament in Late Medieval Douai' *Past and Present* 150 (1996) 3-45.
[50] Jane Whittle and Elizabeth Griffiths, *Consumption and Gender in the Early Seventeenth-Century Household: The World of Alice Le Strange (*Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p.150.
[51] Marcia Pointon, *Strategies for Showing: Women, Possession and Representations in English Visual Culture 1665-1800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p.142.
[52] TNA PROB11/252/441.

about the things that she possessed, and, through her distribution of them, how she felt about the people around her, creating what I would describe as an 'affective inventory'.[53]

However, it would be wrong to assume that wills tell the whole story of property transmission: they are not finite, but part of a process which was documented by the women. References to property which was "already in the hands of" recipients suggest that the will merely serves to codify something which had previously been given, confirming it and preventing disputation. Welthian Goodyear gives her daughter "Marie the now wife of Roger Nevinson the sum of Twenty shillings of good and lawful money of England for a token she having already had a competent portion".[54] Her daughter has already received a satisfactory dowry, so there is no need for Welthian to provide one in her will; the money that she leaves is more a matter of recording her affection for her daughter than making financial provision for her and of putting on record the fact that she had already done so. Marie Eyton uses her will to record her previous actions in order to ensure that her legatees cannot challenge her decisions:

> I give and bequeath to my cousin Wilkins two daughters my late husbands goddaughter and mine Catherine and Mary fifty pounds equally to be divided between them so that they nor either of them do not nor shall not hereafter molest trouble sue or vex in the law mine executrix hereafter named for either of their legacies given them by my said husband William Eyton deceased because I have already paid the same to their said father.[55]

She had paid the girls' father the money and, by stating the same in her will she both confirms her previous action and forestalls any potential contestation. Neither did wills necessarily contain all of a testatrix's bequests. Lady Joyse, Countess of Totnes, not knowing "who shalbe my servants at the tyme of my decease" states her intention to make her wishes in their regard known "apart by it selfe either by word of mouth or in wrytinge as I shall see cause".[56] Similarly, Elizabeth Banester had given her sister "private directions" as to how her money should be distributed to the poor.[57] There is no surviving record of what these transactions were, but Joyse and Elizabeth's reference to these arrangements formalised them in writing. These cases demonstrate the limitations of the will as

[53] James, pp.278-9
[54] TNA PROB11/241/693.
[55] TNA PROB11/195/527.
[56] TNA PROB11/173/61.
[57] TNA PROB11/253/388.

an accurate record of property transmissions: there are arrangements which have gone before, and are merely noted in the will, and other transactions which are alluded to but not fully recorded.

By reconstructing the kinship networks contained in wills, historians have observed that, whereas men conceived of relationships as vertical and used their wills to transfer property directly to the next generation, women spread their gifts more widely, using them to record and reinforce affective relationships.[58] Women's wills were thus populated not only by their children (with daughters often featuring more prominently than sons, including as executrices) but also by sisters, cousins, godchildren, niblings, servants and friends.[59] However, little attention has been paid to the ways in which this cast of people has been deliberately and self-consciously entailed and placed under an obligation by the testatrix. This means that wills have been read as encoding relationships which were ended by the testatrix's death, rather than as perpetuating those attachments into the future. Women's requests for actions after her death relied on and presumed the co-operation of their nominee, and writing a will gave a testatrix the right to require it of the people whom she named.

Women's Writing

This vein of historiography has developed concurrently with the establishment of the field of women's literary studies as a scholarly discipline. This latter has resulted in a consensual view that the category 'women's writing' should be expanded to include a wider range of text-types, yet wills have not been considered as examples of women's literary activity, something which this thesis seeks to do.[60] The volume of work undertaken on recovering and reclaiming women's writing is huge; space only allows a brief overview of its progress in order to position my research.

In her foundational discussion of the establishment of the discipline, Margaret Ezell observes that, initially,

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[58] James, pp.1-2. For a discussion of kinship relationships, see David Cressy 'Kinship and Kin Interaction in Early Modern England' *Past and Present* Number 113 (1986) 38-69.
[59] Susan D. Amussen, *An Ordered Society: Gender and Class in Early Modern England* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), p.91.
[60] Margaret Ezell, *Writing Women's Literary History* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995), p.164.

> the theoretical model of women's literary history and the construction of women's literary studies as a field rest upon the assumption that women before 1700 either were effectively silenced or constituted in an evolutionary model of 'female literature' an early 'immature' phase, contained and co-opted in patriarchal discourse.[61]

Using volumes such as George Ballard's 1752 *Memories of Several Ladies of Great Britain*, catalogues of texts written by women were compiled.[62] This anthologising made women's writing visible and thus challenged the contention that women did not write. However, Ezell is critical of these attempts to reconstruct an 'history' of women's writing. By using selection criteria which relied on models of writing by men, the choice of what to include "may have unconsciously continued the existence of the restrictive ideologies that initially erased the vast majority of women's writings from literary history and teaching texts".[63] She critiques the supposition that there exists a 'tradition' of women's writing waiting to be recovered and that this tradition proves the evolution of women's writing, a model which suggests that women who wrote before the Restoration were isolated, unusual and marginalised.[64] Ezell's intention is to "revision" women's literary past and to challenge the assumptions on which it was based, engaging with the ways in which the contemporary feminist theory conceptualises gender, modes of literary production and the historical conditions of authorship.[65] She concludes that, rather than forcing women's writing into a "monolithic scheme of women's literature", we should acknowledge and embrace its diversity and disorder.[66]

Ezell's influential ideas informed the body of work which followed.[67] The first such monograph was Elaine Hobby's *Virtue of Necessity*, which includes a range of genres written by women during the Interregnum and the reign of

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[61] Ezell, p.4. Anita Pacheo's 1998 anthology *Early Women Writers 1600-1720* opens with the statement that "[t]his collection of critical essays on five women writers of the early modern period testifies to the at least moderate success of one of academic feminism's principal projects: to rectify the historical invisibility of women by rescuing female-authored texts from the oblivion to which they have all too often been consigned by a largely male canon of great literature" (Anita Pacheo, 'Introduction' *Early Women Writers 1600-1720* (Harlow: Longman, 1998), pp.1-22 (p.1)).

[62] George Ballard, *Memoirs of Several Ladies of Great Britain Who Have Been Celebrated for Their Writings of Skill in the Learned Languages, Arts and Sciences* ed. by R. Perry (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1985).

[63] Ezell, p.15.

[64] Ezell, p.18, 30.

[65] Ezell, p.5.

[66] Ezell, p.164.

[67] For a concise overview of the development of the field from Ezell, see Mihoko Suzuki's *The History of British Women's Writing, 1610-1690* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp.1-33.

Charles II.[68] This sought to cover, Christopher Hill asserts, "all women's writing during her chosen period – good, bad and indifferent", but his observation that she "discovered three forgotten women poets" belies the continuing critical focus on the recovery of women's writing.[69] A year later, Germaine Greer published a volume of seventeenth-century women's verse – *Kissing the Rod* – in which she, like Ezell, blames the conflation of publication with writing on nineteenth-century thinking.[70] Greer's introduction situates women's writing in the context in which they wrote, consequently revisioning literary history and women's position within it.[71] These volumes were followed by collections of essays which introduced a wider range of women writers: Clare Brant and Diane Purkiss' *Women, Texts & Histories 1575-1760*; Isobel Grundy and Susan Wiseman's *Women, Writing, History, 1640-1740* and Barbara Lewalski's *Writing Women in Jacobean England* which include a number of aristocratic women writers.[72] These works address the absence of women's writers in the scholarship, bringing their works to public attention and challenging the traditional canon.

The recovery and dissemination of works written by women has not, however, been without its own challenges. Louise Schleiner, using a wide range of theoretical frameworks, asks how it was possible for Tudor and Stuart women to write for "public or semi-public circulation" when they faced considerable difficulties in doing so, presuming that 'publication' was the goal of women writers and thus restricting the range of texts which might be considered.[73] More fundamentally, critics have warned that, in creating a category of 'women's writing', 'woman' has been cast as an "homogenous subculture" in a move which risks replicating the biological essentialism which excluded them from the canon in the first place and have sought to disaggregate the category of 'woman writer'

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[68] Elaine Hobby, *Virtue of Necessity: English Women's Writing, 1648-1688* (Ann Arbour: University of Michigan Press, 1988).
[69] Christopher Hill, 'Review of *Virtue of Necessity*' *Criticism* Vol. 31, No. 4 (1989) 483-486 (p.483).
[70] Germaine Greer, Susan Hastings, Jeslyn Medoff and Melinda Sansone (eds.) *Kissing the Rod: An Anthology of Seventeenth-Century Women's Verse (*New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 1989).
[71] Denise Cuthbert, 'Review: Seventeenth-Century Women Writers: some recent collections' *Milton Quarterly* Vol. 25, No. 1 (1991) 31-4 (p.33).
[72] Clare Brant and Diane Purkiss, *Women, Texts and Histories 1575-1760* (London: Routledge, 1992); Isobel Grundy and Susan Wiseman, *Women, Writing, History, 1640-1740* (London: B.T. Batsford, 1992); Barbara Lewalkski, *Writing Women in Jacobean England* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993).
[73] Louise Schleiner, *Tudor and Stuart Women Writers* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1994), p.xvii.

by calling attention to differences between them, especially in terms of their class position.[74] Like Anita Pacheo, Danielle Clarke questions the monolithicity of the construct 'woman', but, at the same time, warns against consigning 'men' to the same categorisation.[75] Similarly, Laura Lunger Knoppers points to the "plurality and instability of the category of 'woman'", noting that constructions of gender are not "simply binary and static", and highlighting the degree to which gender roles were "constructed, modified and reinforced – and sometimes challenged" in a range of writings.[76] Women writers did not exist in a vacuum, and scholars have also considered how their voices were framed and appropriated by men and the extent to which these voices can be considered 'authentic'.[77] Christina Luckyj suggests that early modern reading and writing practices "elided the author, male or female, as producer of meaning", blurring voices and bringing into question the usefulness of attempting to define authenticity.[78] This situates women's writing alongside men's and considers how it is mediated by and works in consort with men's.

Building on these ideas, David Loewenstein and Janel Mueller's *Cambridge History of Early Modern English Literature* places women's writing within a wider social context and in active dialogue with men's.[79] Their working assumption is that literature is both an agent and product of culture and that, as such, it should be seen as equally reflecting and creating the social, religious and political culture within which it was produced.[80] In doing so, they move away from earlier volumes which read texts as autobiographical, rather than as carefully crafted pieces, and which minimise the creative agency of the writer. This integrated approach is also followed by Patricia Phillippy's recent volume *A*

[74] Paul Salzman, *Reading Early Modern Women's writing: An Anthology 1560-1700* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007); Pacheo, p.1.
[75] Danielle Clarke, *'This Double Voice: Gendered Writing in Early Modern England* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 2000), p.9.
[76] Laura L. Knoppers, *The Cambridge Companion to Early Modern Women's writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p.9. See also Wendy Wall, 'Circulating Texts in Early Modern England' in *Teaching Tudor and Stuart Women Writers* ed. by Susanne Woods and Margaret P. Hannay (New York: M.L.A., 2000), pp.35-51 (p.49).
[77] Christina Luckyj, 'Preface' in *Women Writers in Renaissance England: An Annotated Anthology* ed. by Randall Martin (Harlow: Longman, 2010), pp.ix-xv (p.xi).
[78] Luckyj p.xi.
[79] David Loewenstein, and Janel Mueller, *The Cambridge History of Early Modern English Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p.1.
[80] Loewenstein and Mueller, p.1.

History of Early Modern Women's Writing.[81] She is unsurprised by "the absence to date of an *integrated* history of woman's writing", something which she seeks to address.[82] The design of her volume allows her to track the development of women's writing across the early modern period. It aims to address the multiplicity of forms and media in which women wrote and, consequently, to expand the notion of 'literature' beyond the traditional strictures of "poetry, fiction, drama and essays" and to tackle a situation in which "lack of critical agreement concerning the status of a female tradition or canon … has fostered 'separate but equal' areas of study and their attending literary histories".[83] Phillippy's criticism is that women's writing has been inserted piecemeal into literary history as "'anomalous' works [which] disrupt the monolithic narrative of the masculine cannon", but remains on the outside of it and her book aims to produce a more integrated history of English literature by both men and women.[84]

In order to disrupt the masculine canon, it is necessary to look beyond the traditional genres of which it is comprised. By removing the stricture of publication and including manuscript texts such as letters, the differences as well as similarities in women's literary production can be accepted.[85] Knoppers concurs, but also questions established notions of 'audience': women wrote for a wide range of purposes and this, too, contributes to our understanding of what constitutes women's writing.[86] These ideas have led to an examination of texts which exist outside the traditional (male) canon.[87] Thus, in anthologies, prophetic writing, speeches and petitions are positioned alongside elegies, plays and sonnets, or within volumes which also include writing by women such as Margaret Cavendish and Mary Astell.[88] Letters have received concentrated attention, with

[81] Patricia Phillippy, 'Introduction' in *A History of Early Modern Women's Writing* ed. by Patricia Phillippy (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), pp.1-24.
[82] Phillippy, p.6.
[83] Phillippy, pp.1-2.
[84] Phillippy, p.2.
[85] Ezell, p.57.
[86] Knoppers, p.14.
[87] Despite this, the 2002 anthology *Women's Writing of the Early Modern Period* adopts Peter Widdowson's definition of 'literature' – "distinguished by its own sense of being '*of* the literary" – and selects texts which share the "theme of published writing" (Stephanie Hodgson-Wright, 'Introduction' in *Women's Writing of the Early Modern Period 1588-1688: An Anthology* (Edinburgh. Edinburgh University Press. 2002), p.ix). Loewenstein and Meuller define literature in the sense of "the domain of all knowledge that has been preserved and transmitted in written form" (Loewenstein and Meuller, p.6).
[88] See for example, Stephanie Hodgson-Wright, *Women's Writing of the Early Modern Period* (Edinburgh. Edinburgh University Press. 2002); Isobel Grundy and Susan Wiseman, (eds.) *Women, Writing, History 1640-1740* (London: B.T. Batsford, 1992).

James Daybell working extensively on them.[89] Daybell discusses the ways in which women used the letter as a way of exerting influence, both by appropriating the (masculine) form and rhetoric, but also by developing what he describes as "a distinctly 'feminine' mode of petitioning, a 'scripted' voice that could be appropriated by both men and women".[90] This acknowledgement of a female 'voice' in a document frequently scribed by a man separates the mode of production from the design of the document, something which further expands the range of texts available for consideration as women's writing.[91]

Loewenstein and Muller's assertion that early modern English literature incorporates a "broad spectrum of what later would be classified as history, household advice, religious and political tracts, and much else" has not, however, extended to wills, and this study aims to contribute to the scholarship on women's writing by claiming these legal documents as literary products.[92] As 'intentional authors', women composed, shaped and published their wills; like Knoppers I question accepted notions of 'audience' and propose that the testatrix wrote with her own audience – witnesses, scribe, overseers, family and friends – consciously in mind. Hearing the testatrix's voice in the document implies that it is passively present; I argue that there is, in fact, an actively constructed voice in a will.

Life Writing

Initially, as women's writing was recovered, there was a tendency for it to be read as simply reflecting the lives of the women who wrote it. However, this was soon challenged, and a contextualised reading was developed, such as that by Greer, which employed a more nuanced approach to the study of culturally embedded texts. In his influential work *Renaissance Self-Fashioning*, Stephen Greenblatt outlines a tripartite function of literature "as a manifestation of the concrete

[89] See for example *Early Modern Women's Letter Writing, 1470-1700* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001); *Women Letters in Tudor England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006); (with Andrew Gordon) *Women and Epistolary Agency in Early Modern Culture, 1450-1690* (London: Routledge, 2016).
[90] James Daybell 'Scripting a Female Voice: Women's Epistolary Rhetoric in Sixteenth-Century Letters of Petition' *Women's Writing* Vol. 13, no.1 (2006) 3-22 (p.3).
[91] Conversely, Leonie Hannan in her recent volume *Women of Letters* focuses on letters penned by the women themselves, in effect reducing the field by excluding correspondence which was authored or co-authored by a scribe, thus linking the act of writing with the ability to physically write (Leonie Hannan, *Women of Letters: Gender, Writing and the life of the Mind in Early Modern England* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016).
[92] Loewenstein and Meuller, p.6.

behaviour of its particular author, as itself the expression of the codes by which behavior is shaped, and as a reflection upon those codes".[93] In reading a text, he places these approaches in balance with one another, cautioning against reading early modern writing merely as unproblematically 'autobiographical' or as entirely constrained by social expectations, denying any creative or imaginary intent. As a result, texts should be read not as passive reflections of a woman's life, but as active constructions of it.

The move away from purely 'autobiographical' reading of women's writing has been balanced by an increased interest in their 'life-writing'. Although arguably synonymous, I suggest these terms imply gendered interpretations. 'Autobiography' suggests the whole, chronological accounts of their lives which male autobiographers construct, whilst 'life-writing' seems a more useful description of the "irregularity rather than orderliness … not chronological and progressive but disconnected, fragmentary, or organized into self-sustained units rather than connecting chapters" which Anne Lawrence-Mathers identifies in women's writing.[94] This disjointed and fragmentary nature of women's 'life-writing' is reflected in the range of texts which have been identified as examples of such; whilst there appears to be a consensus that 'life-writing' proliferated after 1640, the definition of what constitutes it is less concrete.[95] David Booy observes that a significant amount of 'autobiographical' writing occurs in documents which were intended for other purposes, with the type of text dictating the form of self-disclosure which takes place.[96] For James Olney, the category includes "the

[93] Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), p.4.
[94] Anne Lawrence-Mathers, 'Introduction' in *Women and Writing c. 1340- c. 1650* ed. by Anne Lawrence-Mathers and Phillipa Hardman (York: York University Press, 2010), p.7. Few women wrote ostensive accounts of their lives and where they did, they were intended for distribution with their circle and frequently served other purposes. Margaret Cavendish's *A True Relation of my Birth, Breeding, and Life*, for example, seeks to establish her own credentials through a defence of her father's status and to defend herself from criticism whilst she was in London petitioning for her share of her husband's sequestered property (Margaret Cavendish, *The Lives of William Cavendishe, Duke of Newcastle, and of his wife, Margaret Duchess of Newcastle* ed. by Mark Antony Lower (London: John Russell Smith, 1872); Alice Thornton revised her diary in order to establish her family's position in disputes (Alice Thornton *The Autobiography of Mrs. Alice Thornton of East Newton, Co. York* (Durham: Surtees Society, 1875).
[95] Sharon Cadman Seelig, 'Introduction: mapping the territory', *Autobiography and Gender in Early Modern Literature: Reading Women's Lives, 1600-1680* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), p.4.
[96] David Booy, *Personal Disclosures: An Anthology of Self-writings from the Seventeenth Century* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002), p.1, 3. Seelig similarly argues that women used a variety of forms to record their lives.

simplest and commonest of literary forms as well as the most elusive":[97] Lotte Fikkers suggests, for example, that, in the law courts "even the illiterate could leave traces of their lives" and that the responses women gave in church courts recorded their life "as they chose to represent it".[98] This latter point is particularly salient in that the women's recording of elements of their lives was deliberate and self-conscious. As a consequence of this expanded repertoire of autobiographical texts, portraits, political writing, religious tracts and pamphlets have all been anthologised as examples of both women's writing and 'life-writing' and have been subjected to a range of methodological approaches.[99]

Despite this willingness to seek out women's self-fashioning in a range of texts, wills have largely been ignored by literary scholars as examples of life-writing. Lloyd Davis has been alone in considering them as such in his chapter on women's wills in *Early Modern English Lives: Autobiography and Self-Representation 1500-1660.*[100] Davis challenges the generic homogeneity of the will, classifying it as a range of texts with diverse stylistic conventions which exist in dialogue with "key institutions such as religion, the law and the family; gender relationships; along with practices of textual production, dissemination, and reception".[101] His contention is that

> simultaneously exceptional and unexceptional, private and public, individual and collective, wills exemplify elite and ordinary women's involvement in producing texts, entering discourse, and representing themselves as capable of acting constructively in interpersonal and institutional contexts.[102]

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[97] James Olney, 'Autobiography and the Cultural Women: a Thematic, Historical, and Bibliographical Introduction' in *Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical* ed. by James Olney (Princetown: Princetown University Press, 1980), pp.3-27 (p.5).
[98] Lotte Fikkers 'Early Modern Women in the English Courts of Law', *Literature Compass* (2018) (1-10) p. 1, 6 < https://doi.org/10.1111/lic3.12499> [Accessed 26 September 2018].
[99] Seelig, p.4; Lawrence-Mathers, p. 4. She compares her observations to those of Donna Stanton, 'Autogynography: Is the Subject Different?' in *The Female Autograph* ed. by Donna Stanton (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987) and argues that descriptions of the nature of autobiographical texts are particularly difficult in relation to women. Elspeth Graham, Hilary Hinds, Elaine Hobby and Helen Wilcox include a wide range of texts in their study of seventeenth-women's autobiography (*Her Own Life: Autobiographical Writings by Seventeenth-century Englishwomen* (London: Routledge, 1989)).
[100] Ronald Bedford, Lloyd Davis and Philippa Kelly, *Early Modern English Lives: Autobiography and Self-Representation 1500-1660* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2007), pp.203-218.
[101] Lloyd Davis, 'Women's Wills in Early Modern England' *Women, Property, and the Letters of the Law in Early Modern England* ed. by Margaret W. Furguson, A.R. Buck and Nancy E. Wright (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2004), pp.219-236 (p. 219).
[102] Davis, *Early Modern English Lives*, p.206.

Some of his observations about the ways in which women used their wills to position others – to create "new kinds of identities and roles for the parties involved" and to signify the "past, present and future agency of its author" – and the ways in which they "signify the interaction of judgments in [the] familial and social spheres", accord with my arguments; he, too, considers women's wills alongside depictions of women's will-writing on stage and mothers' legacy texts.[103] However, his actual discussion of 'Wills, Authorship and Identity', whilst claiming will-making as "a powerful instance of early modern individuality as social identity in action", falls short of claiming wills as artefacts of self-fashioning.[104] He acknowledges the potential of wills, but minimises the notion of women's agency: wills record women's individuality, but he does not allow for deliberate construction of aspects of their lives.

Given the plurality of texts which scholars have identified as life-writing and the variety of critical approaches used to examine them, I argue that wills could and should be considered as facets of women's life-writing. Their availability to a wider cross-section of society means that they allow us access to the "perceived identity and [an] articulation of that identity" of a range of women; unlike James, I resist the tendency to rely on the wills of elite women and to extrapolate from them the experience of others, seeking to hear the voices of women from a broader spectrum of the will-making population.[105] 'Life-writing' is, by definition, a unique and individual endeavour and, by exploring wills from a wider range of women my intention is to acknowledge their experiences as they sought to fashion them.

Law and Literature

The intersection between the law and literature is another tranche of the critical underpinning of this thesis. Whatever women sought to say about themselves and their lives was both permitted and constrained by the legal form of the will. The availability of the document allowed women to record their intentions, but these were formulated and couched in a legal language which ensured the validity of their bequests, but which could make the testatrix's voice more difficult to hear. Growing out of New Historicism, the study of Law and Literature has also

[103] Davis, *Early Modern English Lives*, p.210, 212.
[104] Davis, *Early Modern English Lives*, p.210.
[105] James, p.2.

evolved over the past thirty years or so, although more recent scholars have added 'history' to its title as an acknowledgement of the complexity and specificity of the relationship between the law and literature at different times.[106] Anthony Julius identifies four elements to Law and Literature: the study of the law relating to literature, such as defamation and copyright; the literary quality of legal texts; methods of interpreting legal and literary texts and how the law and legal processes are represented in literature.[107] This latter strand has considered how a wide range of literary texts depict and interpret legal acts, the premise being that their fictionalised representations can inform an understanding of the actual situation, treating writers as objective observers of the process.[108] With regard to the early modern period, Shakespeare's plays have received a significant amount of attention; Ian Ward, for example, uses several plays as a way of "supplementing the study of late sixteenth- and seventeenth-century constitutional thought", whilst Subha Mukherji's goal of constructing "a history of law as lived experience from a research of … primary material" includes not only Shakespeare but also plays by a range of other playwrights.[109]

Law *as* literature, as Ward defines it, is concerned with the application of "the techniques and methods of literary theory and analysis … to legal scholarship".[110] Law is already literature, Ward asserts, and an acknowledgement of the interdisciplinarity of legal texts is useful for considering how they are created and read. This has led to an increased focus on the way that language is used and interpreted in legal texts, something which underpins the work of James Boyd White.[111] For White, the employment of literary techniques for reading legal documents means that literary texts become valid examples for lawyers to study.

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[106] Lorna Hutson, 'Introduction', *Oxford Handbook of Law and Literature 1500-1700,* ed. by Lorna Hutson, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), p.2. See also Kieran Dolin 'Introduction', *Law and Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018) pp.1-6; Christine L. Krueger 'Law and Literature and History' in Kieran Dolin (ed.) *Law and Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018) pp.58-76.

[107] Anthony Julius 'Introduction' in *Law and Literature: Current Legal Issues Volume 2* ed. by Michael Freeman and Andrew Lewis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp.xi-xxv (p.xiii).

[108] Julius, 'p.xiii.

[109] Ian Ward 'Shakespeare revisited' in *Law and Literature: Possibilities and Perspectives*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp.59-89 (p.59); Subha Mukherji *Law and Representation in Early Modern Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp.7-8.

[110] Ian Ward, *Law and Literature: Possibilities and Perspectives*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p.16.

[111] James Boyd White 'Law as Language: Reading Law and Reading Literature', *Texas Law Review* 60 (1982) 415-45.

The application of analytical paradigms places literary and legal texts on a par, and, rather than looking for legal arguments, law as literature scholars such as J. Frug advocate shifting the focus to the rhetorical properties of texts.[112]

The interdisciplinary approach of law and literature (and history) has encouraged a re-evaluation of the relationship between writer and reader, and the extent to which meaning is co-created. This has allowed for an examination of "literary and legal constructions of intention and agency" and it is this intersection between the legal document and the creative opportunity which it represented which informs this study.[113] Whilst, in chapter one, I consider how women's will-making is represented in drama and the extent to which this action relies on the audience's understanding of the form, my primary focus is on the law *as* literature and the extent to which vocabulary choices, the use of repetition and emphasis and the inclusion of affective descriptors in wills cast them as literary and creative documents. Women used a legal form and structure, but they did so in order to present a version of themselves, selecting and omitting material as they felt appropriate. The result is a document in which 'Law' might be the dominant partner, but which can nonetheless be read as 'Literature'.

The Scope of the Study

Geography

Ideas of wills as literary texts, as examples of life-writing and as instances of law *as* literature underpin my study of some six hundred wills from across the south-west of England, proved between 1625 and 1660. This is a smaller and more geographically-focused sample than that used by James, but it nevertheless offers a rich seam of material upon which to base my discussion of women's will-writing as a form of self-fashioning, and as examples of women's writing.

[112] J. Frug, 'Argument as Character', *Stanford Law Review,* 40 (1988) 867-927 (p.871).
[113] Hutson, *Oxford Handbook* p.6. See also Luke Wilson *Theatres of Intention: Drama and the Law in Early Modern England* (Palo Alto: Stanford University Press, 2001).

Figure 1. *Google* map of the wills consulted.[114]

Geographically, the south-west did not exist in any unified way at the beginning of the seventeenth century, although, when Cromwell instigated the Rule of the Major Generals in 1655, the six counties of Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and Somerset, along with the city of Bristol, formed the area under the control of John Disbrowe.[115] The choice of this region for my study was partly pragmatic, as it is an area which I know very well, but it was also informed by the observation that it has fewer extant wills than other parts of the country.[116] One reason for this is that air raids in 1942 destroyed the archive in Exeter which held the records of Devon and Somerset. This means that women from the region have been less likely to be included in studies; Susan James includes women from Bristol, but rarely ventures further south-west.

Considering women from this part of the country allows me to move the focus away from London, to hear the voices of women from a different part of the country, with different experiences of life. The south-west is and was a topographically diverse area. Bristol, the largest city, was England's second port

[114] 'South West Women's Wills' *Google My Maps* <https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?hl=en&mid=16S4sPK2fH8aP7zdNpjdUYA83hEc&ll=51.45746161749501%2C-2.59381439270021&z=14> [Accessed 3 September 2018].
[115] 'The Rule of the Major-Generals' *BCWProject,* <http://bcw-project.org/church-and-state/the-protectorate/rule-of-the-major-generals> [Accessed 3 September 2018]. See also Christopher Durston *Cromwell's Major-Generals: Godly Government during the English Revolution* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2001).
[116] Goose and Evans, p.39.

and the country's third city after London and Norwich.[117] At the beginning of the seventeenth-century, its geographical position in relation to the south-west, the continent and trade routes to the new world and the West Indies, meant that the city was enjoying a second 'golden age'.[118] During the years 1625-1660, it reaped the benefits of this expansion and commerce, but also endured significant challenges under the reign of Charles I and during the Civil Wars, when its value as a centre for communication, overseas trade and contacts, and as a manufacturing hub, meant it was a valuable target for both sides and this is reflected in the number of times that the city changed hands.[119] As the largest city in the area, Bristol has the greatest number of extant wills, and these therefore form a substantial part of the data-set I use. However, my aim is to ensure that it is not just city voices that are heard. This means that I have made a conscious effort to ensure that I have included examples from a range of settlements, towns, villages and hamlets, from topographically diverse parts of the south-west area including countryside, forest and coast, creating a representative data-set. My intention has not been to attempt to compare the wills from these places, or to construct any comprehensive narrative about the historical or religious context of the area, but to ensure that as wide a range of women as possible is represented. Thus, as the above map illustrates, my sample is representative if not comprehensive.

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[117] For an outline of the rural activities recorded in the area see Jane Whittle and Mark Hailwood 'The Gender Division of Labour in Early Modern England' *Economic History Review* (2018) 1-30 (pp.7-8) <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/ehr.12821?author_access_token=qC2fa7jiJsVg4dZADMxZl4ta6bR2k8jH0KrdpFOxC67PDymL1f8bnrpdhOvQT6IvXJniiQmXh9siAp_0cZ-InMcH28NQs_iwfth01IjM7Yyxs1WWMFPkr3RmwA4QePd4> [Accessed 21 February 2019].

[118] Jonathan Harlow, (ed.) *The Ledger of Thomas Speed 1681-1690* (Bristol: Bristol Record Society, 2011), p.xi; Peter Fleming, P. 'Women in Bristol 1373-1660' in *Women and the City: Bristol 1373-2000* ed. by Madge Dresser (Bristol: Redcliffe Press, 2016), p.16, 18. The first 'golden age' ended at the start of the sixteenth century.

[119] For the history of Bristol at this time see for example John Latimer *The Annals of Bristol in the Seventeenth Century* (Bristol: William George's Sons, 1900); David Underdown *Revel, Riot and Rebellion: Popular Politics and Culture in England 1603-1660* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985); John Lynch *For King & Parliament: Bristol and the Civil War* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 1999); Joshua Sprigge *Anglia Rediviva: England's recovery: being the history of the motions, actions, and successes of the army under the immediate conduct of Sir Thomas Fairfax* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1854) < https://archive.org/details/angliaredivivaen00spri> [Accessed 7th December 2017].

History

In situating my study in the seventeenth century, I build on the work of those, primarily James, who have focused on the previous century. The period 1625-1660 is relatively short, but it was a time of significant religious, political and social change, yet wills written between these dates have not been read in any systematic way as reflective of that change.[120] Whilst earlier wills have been considered as evidence of the Reformation and the vacillating doctrines of Catholicism and Protestantism, the impact of the continuing development of Protestantism during the Stuart era has attracted less attention.[121] For some reformers, changes to religion had not gone far enough and Charles I's fondness for ritual theatricality, allied to his marriage to a Catholic who was allowed to practice, exacerbated their frustrations. It is not my intention to attempt a systematic analysis of the doctrinal positions suggested by women's preambles, as some historians have, but to consider how religious considerations form part of their self-fashioning.

Charles I's religious proclivities were just one cause of frustration with his rule. His repeated dissolution of parliament and the instigation of personal rule contributed to a situation in which the Parliamentarians were able to challenge his position, to rebel against the notion of the Divine Right of Kings, and to ultimately enforce the regicide and establish a Commonwealth. These events had practical implications for will-making. Firstly, the process of will-proving was disrupted by the abolition of church courts and the absence of a suitable replacement. In addition, reference to the number of years Charles had reigned as part of the date formulation disappeared and there was no replacement for it until the Restoration, when the reign of Charles II was retrospectively numbered from the date of his father's death. However, the effects of the Civil Wars are also

[120] For recent scholarship on the period, see (for example): David Como *Radical Parliamentarians and Civil War* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018); David Cressey *Charles I and the people of England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015); Richard Cust *Charles I and the Aristocracy, 1625*-1642 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); Andrew Hiscock and Helen Wilcox (eds.) *The Oxford Handbook of Early Modern Literature and Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017); Blair Worden *The English Civil Wars, 1640-1660* (London: Phoenix, 2009); Jason McElligott *Royalists and Royalism during the English Civil Wars* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Andrew Barclay *Electing Cromwell: the Making of a Politician* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2011). For an overview of the ways in which history of the period has been approached over the past forty years see Barry Coward 'Introduction' in *A Companion to Stuart Britain* (Chichester; Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), pp.xiii-xxiv.

[121] See also Elisabeth Salter *Cultural Creativity in the Early English Renaissance* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

evident in women's references to them: Ann Pinn of Plymouth, for example, remembers the deliverance of the city in her will.[122] Again, the intent is not to reconstruct women's lives during the Civil Wars, but to consider how they used the events happening around them as part of their self-fashioning.

Sources

At the beginning of the period considered, wills were generally proved locally, in the Archdeacons' courts; where property was held in different places, or where there were disputes at the Archdeacons' courts, they were referred to the Consistory court, under the control of a Bishop. Finally, wills which left property of a higher value were proved the Prerogative Courts of York or Canterbury.[123] In the 1640s, the abolition of a hierarchy of ecclesiastical officers challenged the established system of church courts and left the English Parliament in need of an alternative arrangement for probate. Attempts to centralise the system were temporarily undermined by the establishment of an alternative court with Charles I at Oxford, before the official court was re-established in London.[124] After the execution of the king, proceedings of the court continued as before, retaining the same style and fees, but were conducted in English rather than Latin. In terms of the documents themselves, this meant that the written proof contained with the will changed from Latin to English across the period.

Wills that were proved locally are held in county archives: the Bristol Archives; the Cornwall Record Office at Truro; the Wiltshire and Swindon History Centre at Chippenham; the Dorset History Centre at Dorchester; the Gloucestershire Archives in Gloucester.[125] Although, in some cases, it is possible to view the original will, or the original register copy of a will, many have been digitised in order to preserve them: Bristol and Cornwall's wills exist on microfiche whilst those from Gloucestershire, Wiltshire and Dorset are available to the public

[122] TNA PROB11/163/331.
[123] York covered the north of England, whilst Canterbury proved the wills of the south of the country and all property left overseas.
[124] For a comprehensive survey of the probate system and the changes to it in the 1640s and 1650s see Christopher Kitching, 'Probate during the Civil War and Interregnum. Part I: The survival of the Prerogative Court in the 1640s' *Journal of the Society of Archivists.* Volume 5, number 5 (1975) 283-293; Christopher Kitching, 'Probate during the War and Interregnum Part II: The Court for Probate 1653-1660' *Journal of the Society of Archivists.* Volume 5, number 6 (1976) 346-356.
[125] As previously mentioned, records from Somerset and Devon, held at the Devon records office, were lost in 1942 when the city was destroyed by German bombers.

on *Ancestry.co.uk*. Those that were proved at Canterbury – either because of the type of property left in them, or because they were proved under the new centralised system in the 1640s and 50s – are housed at the National Archives and are now available through The National Archives Online.[126] Appendix one records the wills consulted and transcribed, by date and with reference to where the original is held.[127] It is organised chronologically, demonstrating the range of years covered and also how patterns of proving moved from local archives to the Prerogative Court during the Interregnum.

Where it is possible to view original wills, they attest to the materiality of the documents, to their endurance over centuries and to the extent to which they bear witness to the time which has passed. Looking at the manuscript will of Liddia Reade, for example, allows a consideration of the materiality of the document and an insight into the way it was produced. It covers the recto of a folded sheet, with the proof written on the verso.

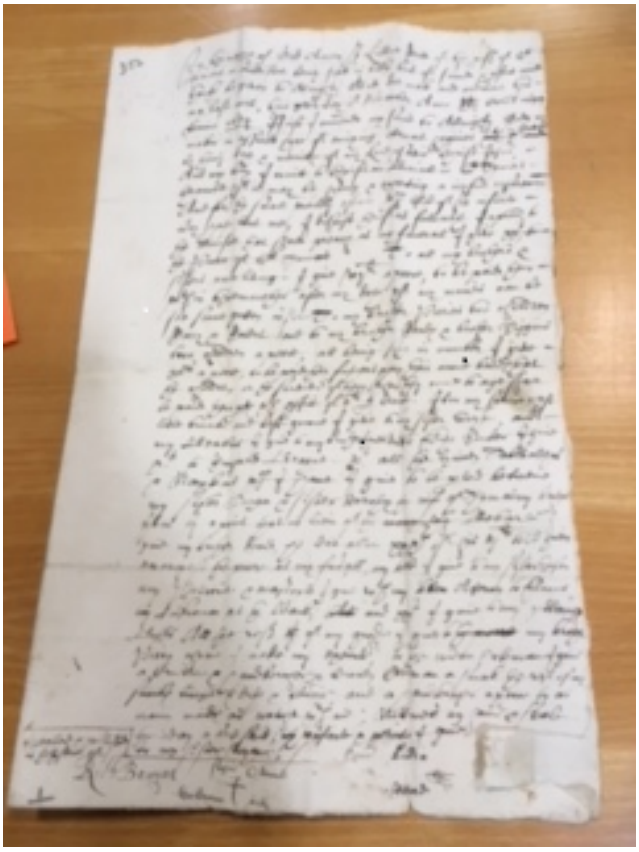

Figure 2. Bristol Archives FCW1634/4/32.[128]

[126] <http://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/>
[127] For a sortable version of the database, see <https://1drv.ms/x/s!Auwd9tf2-VWylGfkZqSA_jTKeoQv>
[128] Photographs of wills from the Bristol archive are reproduced with their kind permission.

The writing fills the page, lines getting closer together as the scribe ran out of space and it is possible to see, in the relative colour of the ink, where he has had to refill his pen before being able to continue. The will is littered with errors and corrections which suggest that it was written in one sitting, rather than being a later record of a conversation: for example, the date is crossed out, the word “domini” put in and then the year reinstated and underlined. There are other deletions, as if the scribe got ahead of himself, anticipating what Liddia was going to say, and then having to correct himself. He introduces a charitable gift which is not forthcoming and has to strike out the initial phrase. Whatever his expectations as to the contents and order of bequests, this was Liddia’s will and his presumptions had no place in it. These errata identify this as a working document, as does the fact that a line at the bottom of the page which separates the text of the will from the signatures, including Liddia’s mark, appears to have been drawn in the same ink as that in which the proof is written. These details are lost in register copies, but, in the original, it is possible to see the contributions that each party makes to the document: the signature of the scribe; the marks of Liddia and the witnesses; the hand of the official who granted probate and, at the same time, appears to have ‘tidied-up’ the page with his line. There is even a thumb print in the place where the scribe would have held the document in order to read it to Liddia and the witnesses.

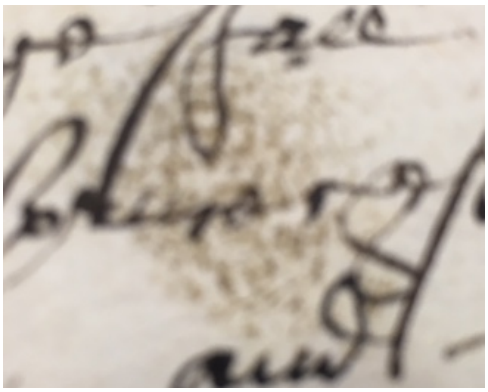

Figure 3. FCW1634/4/32.

Whilst the majority of wills were written on paper, some women committed their intentions to parchment. The will of Anne White, also of Bristol has an inventory

and letter of administration attached to it by strips of waste parchment and an impressive wax seal.[129]

Figure 4. FCW1651-7/4/31,32,33.

Unlike Liddia, Anne wrote her will when she was "now in health of body" and this appears to be confirmed by the document produced by her scribe. Not only is it largely error free, but William Davis has decorated it, adding curlicues to the prelude, embellishing the 'I' of 'Item' and drawing an elaborate figure in the top left-hand corner of the page.

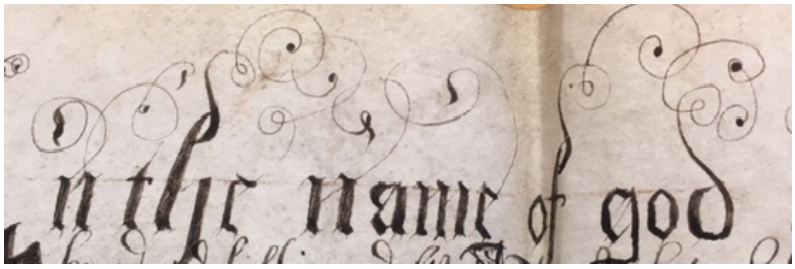

Figure 5. FCW1651-7/4/31,32,33.

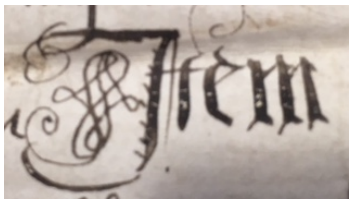

Figure 6. FCW1651-7/4/31,32,33.

[129] FCW1651-7/4/31/32/33.

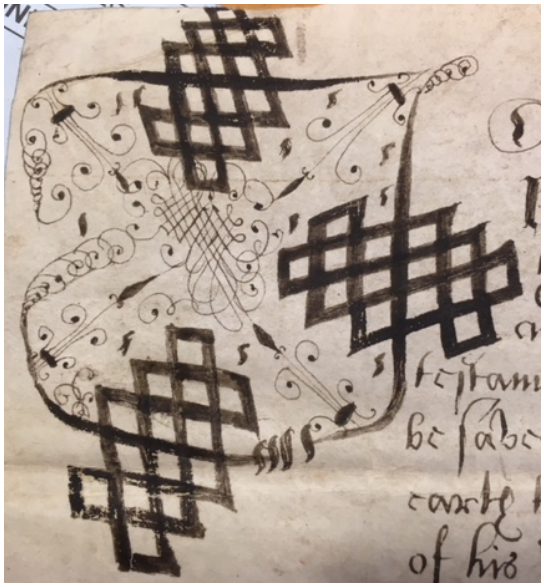

Figure 7. FCW1651-7/4/31,32,33.

These decorations suggest that the will was produced at Davis' leisure, based on notes from a conversation. The lack of immediate need of it allowed him time to write it and the embellishments imply a degree of pride in his work. Written when Anne was in health, it was a document which she would see; as a result, the aesthetic of it took on an increased importance, perhaps even as some sort of advertisement for Davis' work as a scribe. The choice of parchment may well have been Anne's; there is no way of knowing whether she commissioned the decorations, but they remain part of her enduring legacy in the archive.

In rare cases, copies of wills exist in multiple archives; the will of Barbara Walker of Bristol, for example is conserved at the National Archives, the Bristol Archives and the Bristol Court of Orphans and these iterations are substantively the same, with two of them being copies of the original.[130] However, there are also three wills written by Alice Attwood, and these are significantly different, raising questions as to how and why multiple versions were written and proved. The first (A), dated 1644, was proved at Canterbury in 1646. Another (B1), dated 1648, was proved at Bristol in the same year and the third (B2), dated 1645 was proved in 1649 at Canterbury.[131] The two B wills are basically the same and were probably just copies entered into the two different registers. There is a high degree of congruence between the people and gifts contained in both and the differences in the date and minor inconsistencies in wording are arguably scribal

[130] TNA PROB11/173/630; FCW1637/5; FCBO2/139, 40.
[131] TNA PROB11/195/503; FCW1645/1; NA PROB11/208/748.

mis-copying or choice ("I ordain that he be sent" becomes "if he be sent"; "the said Trunk and clothes" is rendered "the said trunk and chest").

The earlier will (A), on the other hand, is considerably different. The commendation contained in the B wills is absent in A, which contains no reference to either body or soul. Neither does A give a marital status or parish of residence. It was witnessed by Matthew Wolfe who, whilst he appears in several other Bristol wills, was not the witness of the B wills.[132] However, there are some salient features which are shared by the two versions. Fewer beneficiaries appear in A but there are some important correlations between the two in terms of the people named. The amount might be different, but Alice leaves money to the same "sister Joane the wife of Robert Reade of Bristol cooper". She gives two separate gifts of money to the same three brothers, Richard, James and George. Richard Nethway, brewer, is named as her father-in-law: in A he is a creditor and B a legatee; Robert Reade is executor of A, but a beneficiary of B.[133] It was not unusual for members of different branches of a family to have the same name, but the relationship descriptors – brother, sister, father-in-law, brother-in-law – suggest that there would have to be sisters, both named Alice, for them to be written by different women. Even if one of the names were a misspelling or miscopying of a closely related name, it seems unrealistic to accept that 'Alice' was missing as a beneficiary in the first will. If they were written by the same woman, they might reflect a change in her circumstances, one perhaps written at a time of crisis and then rethought once that crisis had passed. However, that both versions appear to have been proved, and that there is no indication that either was challenged, perhaps suggests a probate system which was in a state of flux.

The Form of the Will

The material variation in the form of the will is replicated in the variety of ways in which the will was organised and, in order to interrogate how this structure is used and manipulated, it is necessary to understand the scheme as I am defining it. Many of the generic markers appear at the start of the will, establishing the purpose of the document at the outset. Whilst nuncupative wills are usually

[132] TNA PROB11/239/439.
[133] James Attwood and Nicholas Tilly both appear in the will of a George Attwood from 1664 (TNA PROB11/314/472).

identified as 'the nuncupative will of' or as a 'memorandum', a legal injunction meaning "it is to be remembered (that)", written wills frequently open with the prelude "in the name of God Amen", a statement which asserts that the testatrix is making her will in the knowledge, and with the tacit permission of God.[134] However, the formulation is not ubiquitous, suggesting that it was an element over which the testatrix had some control and which they could use and manipulate. Some forego it altogether, opening instead with the identification of the testatrix: "I Margarett Daniell".[135] For some, the prelude is replaced by an announcement of the function of the document – "this is the last will and testament of Dorcas Lord" – or of the situation of the testatrix: "For as much as I Elizabeth Slaughter am now fallen into a time of great mortality".[136] These preludes foreground the testatrix and the purpose of the document, making clear her own situation. When Ursula Dowle uses as her prelude "the true and perfect accompt of Ursula Dowle widowe the relict and administratrix of all and singular the goods credits and rights of John Dowle late whilst he lived of the parish of St Peters within the city of Bristol deceased intestate by her made", she emphasises her own position.[137] She is keen to advertise her will as a "true and perfect account", testifying to her honesty and the skill and efficiency with which she had administered the intestate estate of her husband. She uses her prelude as a way of placing on record the work that she had done to put not only her own estate in order, but also John's. Her declaration appears to presume an audience who, she believed, needed to know the role she had played. Similarly, Margery Pierson opens her will – a document designed to ensure that her son would allow her to keep the property he would inherit at her death for the remainder of her life – with "be it known unto all men by these present that Margery Pierson …".[138] She directs her will at an unspecified group of men whom, through her prelude, she recruits as supporters in her suit. Thus, women adopted and adapted as a prelude forms which served to position them in relation either to God, or to other people.

The prelude is generally followed by a statement of the woman's credentials: her name, marital status and where she lives. This is the first

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[134] For example, "The nuncupative will of Alice Welch" (TNA PROB11/276/273); "memorandum, int. and n." *Oxford English Dictionary Online* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, June 2018) <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/116345> [Accessed 24 July 2018].
[135] TNA PROB11/294/677.
[136] TNA PROB11/195/266; PROB11/196/461.
[137] Bristol Archives FCBO 3/6/11.
[138] Gloucestershire, England, Wills and Inventories, 1541-1858 (*Ancestry.co.uk*) 203472.

appearance of the testatrix, the "I" who will dominate the document. Although this identification might appear to represent an incontestable statement of the testatrix's position, the 'I', as chapter two will demonstrate, was a construction and the inclusion by some women of other information as markers of their identity demonstrates the extent to which this element was open to manipulation in the testatrix's pursuit of self-fashioning. In presenting "I" as the widow of a named husband, or by stating an occupation, or associating it with a particular place, a woman was creating it as much as she was recording it; "I" is not neutral, but a selective construct.

The Yorkshire ecclesiastical lawyer Henry Swinburne, in his 1590 *A Treatise of testaments and last wills* allows that "Euerie person (both man and woman, Christian & Iewe, sound or sicke; and generally of what state or condition so euer he, or she be) hath full power and liberty to make a testament or last Will and may therein dispose of his goods and cattelles" but he excludes "madde folks, and idiots to whom also I may ioyne those persons who be so very olde, that they become childishe againe".[139] Testatrices therefore frequently followed their credentials with a statement which confirmed their mental capacity to write a will and thus forestall any legal challenge to it. Liddia Reade, for example, testifies that she is "sick in body but of sound and perfect mind", although women writing in advance of their death, might affirm that they were "sound of body and of perfect remembrance".[140] Whatever their physical condition, establishing their mental competency was vital. Writing a will when in health was one of the tenets of achieving a good death and the *Book of Common Prayer* held that "men must be oft admonished that they set an order for their temporall goodes and lands, when they be in health".[141] The *Directory for Publique Worship* which superseded

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[139] Swinburne, p.34v; Sheila Doyle 'Swinburne, Henry (c.1551-1624), ecclesiastical lawyer' *Oxford Dictionary of National* Biography (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) <www.oxforddnb.com.lib.exeter.ac.uk/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-26836> [Accessed 15 October 2018]. Swinburne was the first person to write on the subject in the vernacular, and his work was "the first recourse on the subject for over two hundred years" (J.H. Baker, 'English Canon Lawyers V: Henry Swinburne' *Ecclesiastical Law Journal* 3.12 (1993) 5-9 (p.7)) < https://0-www-cambridge-org.lib.exeter.ac.uk/core/services/aop-cambridge-core/content/view/7E131E8974F05BD0443022DEF2CB9F7C/S0956618X00001666a.pdf/famous_english_canon_lawyers_v.pdf> [Accessed 15 October 2018].

[140] FCW1634/4/32; Marie Eyton, PROB11/195/527.

[141] Brian Cumming, *The Book of Common Prayer: the texts of 1549, 1559 and 1662* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p.166. This wording, from the 1559 version, varies only in spelling from the earlier iteration. In 1662, the admonition read: "But men should oft be put in

the *BCP* also emphasises the desirability of writing a will before the final sickness, stating that "[t]he minister shall admonish him also (as there shall be cause) to set his house in order, thereby to prevent inconveniences".[142] Thus, preparing a will in advance allowed a woman to demonstrate that she understood the importance of being prepared for her death, whenever it should come.

The relative sickness of body and mind at the time of writing the will was, of course, negated by the death of the testatrix. Acknowledging this, wills generally include a preamble commending their soul to God and, often, a statement concerning the disposal of their body.[143] Like the commendation of the soul, arrangements for the body were something which had been affected by the Reformation. Protestant doctrine espoused a disregard for the fate of the body; burial in consecrated ground was seen as an act of decency and respect, but not as serving any salutary purpose.[144] This indifference might have been the ideal, but wills demonstrate a range of requests concerning burial. Some women ask to be decently buried; others request burial in the church or churchyard of her parish; others to be interred near their husband or kin. In these individual choices we can hear the voice of the testatrix; a scribe might have had an influence over the wording of the commendation of her soul, but the woman made the request for the fate of her body. There was, of course, no guarantee that she would be buried where she wished, but the will gave her the opportunity to make and record her choice.

The testatrix's credentials and qualification to write a will established and her soul and body commended, she then moves to the primary purpose of the document, the devising of her property. In this, women often recorded a conscious distancing of themselves from their worldly goods. These goods had been provided by God and were only temporarily the property of the women. Alice Hill disposes of the goods and chattels which it had "pleased god to bestow upon me here in this vale of misery";[145] God had, "of his infinite mercy" leant Joane

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remembrance to take order for setting of their temporal estates, whilst they are in health" (ibid. p.445).

[142] *A Directory For the Publique Worship of God Throughout the Three Kingdomes of England, Scotland and Ireland. Together with an Ordinance of Parliament for the taking away of the Book of Common Prayer and For establishing and observing of this present Directory throught the Kingdom of England and Dominion of Wales.* (London: M.B., 1646), p.31.

[143] See the section on Historiography for a discussion of the use of commendatory preambles.

[144] Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion,* p.125.

[145] TNA PROB11/11/184/430.

Weale her worldly goods;[146] Elizabeth Trosse introduces her bequests as "my worldly goods and estate wherewith it hath pleased Allmightie God to blesse mee".[147] In so designating her goods, the testatrix demonstrated a willingness to die which transcended attachment to earthly things. These temporary, God-leant goods were recorded, often in great detail, with list-markers – usually 'item' or the abbreviation 'it' – separating one bequest from another.[148] In many cases, the residue of her estate was left to a testatrix's executor, who was named, along with her overseers at the end of the will.

Having disbursed her goods and chattels, the testatrix set her "hand and seal" to the will, confirming not only her bequests, but also her credentials and her qualification to write a will. She thereby authorised not only her gifts, but also the document as a true reflection of her wishes. The vast majority of women could not write, and instead made their mark, which was identified by the scribe as such. Occasionally, however, a woman did sign her name: Theophila Dodimead of Bristol, for example, in a cautious and painstaking hand affixed her name to the bottom of her will.

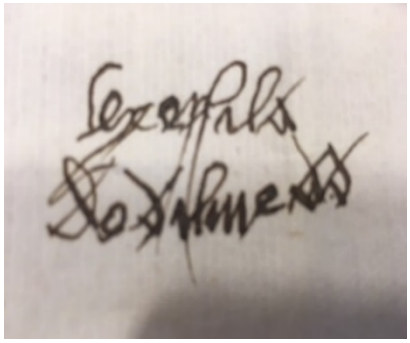

Figure 8. Bristol Archive FCW1629/1/2

Her signature sits alongside that of the scribe, George Hartwell and the names of her witnesses. These were provided by Hartwell, next to the men's marks, acknowledging their attendance, but Theophila's signature signals her unmediated presence in the text. Hartwell's signature was a straightforward record of his name, but Richard Brayne offered his with something of a flourish at the end of Liddia Read's will:

[146] TNA PROB11/164/490.
[147] TNA PROB11/163/567.
[148] Emme Beare of Saltash separates her bequests with 'more' (TNA PROB11/248/296).

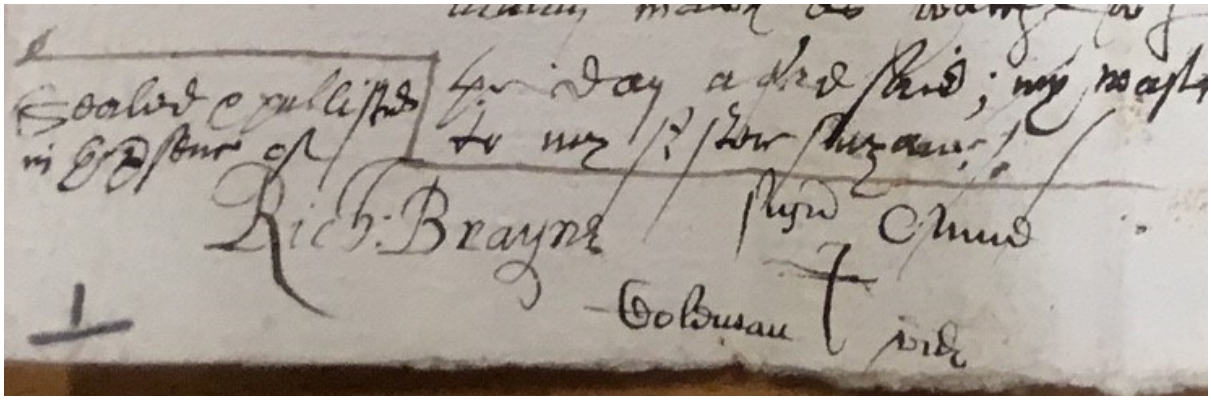

Figure 9. Bristol Archives FCW1634/4/32.

Finally, the will was sealed.

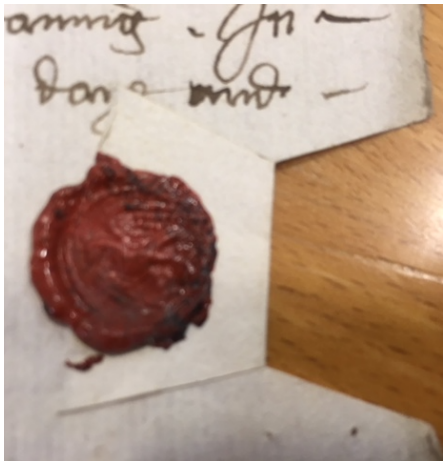

Figure 10. Bristol Archives FCW1629/1/2

This scheme – prelude, credentials, qualification, commendatory preamble, bequeathing of property, appointment of executrix and overseers, signing and sealing – is, however, a conflation of all the elements possibly present in wills. Many contain all these parts; others contain most of them; a few omit several. It is given here as a pattern against which deviations and the significance for them in terms of the testatrix's design might be read.

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In chapter one, an examination of the ways in which wills and will-writing were constructed on the early modern stage suggests that the form and the act of composing the document were widely familiar. As such, the will was a productive device for dramatists, through which they could shorthand a host of ideas. This chapter further considers how gendered performances of the act of will-writing

were used for specific dramatic functions and suggests its use as a tool for self-fashioning on stage was predicated on an understanding of this function in real-life. This section also examines the use of the will form as a vehicle for satire, with the employment of a female speaker serving to emphasise the impotence of a woman who had nothing to leave. The chapter ends by proposing that, since law in literature implicitly acknowledges the agency of the 'author' (whether male or female), we may similarly deduce that real-life wills can be read as literature. Through these texts, the 'intentional' writer sought to direct future action, assign a range of roles, costume cast members and supply props to create scenes in which she would not appear.

Chapter two explores the range of people who were cast and entailed by women within their wills. Using the authority afforded to them by their proximity to death, women employed the document to appoint a range of people – including scribes, priests, executors, overseers, beneficiaries – and to presume their compliance. This chapter builds on the historiography of will-writing but seeks to problematise some of the questions about the agency of the testatrix raised by historians by proposing a more nuanced reading of wills and of the interactions which took place around the composition of the document, considering the process as well as the static product. This interpretation recognises the will as an agential tool through which women created a self, selecting, manipulating and projecting the image with which they wanted to be associated, thus re-casting wills as examples of life-writing.

The primary function of the will was the disposal of property, and historians have used them, as well as their attendant inventories, to illustrate the assemblages of material culture with which people surrounded themselves. Chapter three, by contrast, considers the ways in which women used descriptions of their property as a way of recalling scenes in which they had acted and of maintaining affective relationships with the people amongst whom it is distributed. The giving of items with the designator "my" identifies objects as implicit memorials to the testatrix, but some women used their wills to explicitly invite memorialisation. Thus, the clothes, plate, linen, household implements and impedimenta of trade belonging to the testatrix's past are envisaged in the legatee's future. Considering wills in this way challenges simplistic notions of the timescales used in this legal document and chapter three concludes with a consideration of how women manipulated multiple pasts, presents and futures as

part of their design of self-fashioning, creating a heterochronic texture within the document.

Chapter four brings together ideas of self-fashioning, life-writing, authorship and post-mortem authority in a case study of Lucy Reynell of Newton Abbott, Devon. Lucy's will is one of a number of texts written either by or about her and can be read as part of a campaign of self-fashioning. Whilst this study is not concerned with confirming the validity of the claims made in their wills to women's property ownership or worth via corroborative documents such as inventories, these texts – Lucy's portrait, the household accounts, the charter for her almshouses, the tomb she built for her family, and her nephew's hagiographic account of her life and death – allow for a more holistic view of Lucy's projected self. The will is thus placed in dialogue with these other texts and the additional textual evidence allows a more accurate consideration of the extent to which this legal document may be considered representative of her conscious self-fashioning. These texts are strikingly congruent and provide supporting evidence for the notion of the will as a vehicle for deliberate and artful self-fashioning.

Chapter One

"I am making my will, as 'tis fit a princes should": Depictions of Women Making Wills in 'Imaginative' Literature.[1]

The presentation of legal processes in drama has been read by critics as contributing to our understanding of how the law worked in the early modern period. Both Ian Ward and Subha Mukerji, for example, argue that fictionalised representations can offer information about actual procedures.[2] Mukerji's intention is to (re)create people's lived experiences of the law from the depictions of it on the stage, in dialogue with legal treatises, and the significance of the intersection between the theatre and real life. This echoes Erica Sheen and Lorna Hutson's observation that "it's important to counterbalance an account of the assimilation of legal discourse into non-legal institutional contexts like theatre with an understanding of the way law worked as a framework for daily life".[3] The efficacy of the dramatisation of legal activities was contingent upon people's understanding of those processes. Although the number of people writing wills was relatively small, many others were involved in their production as witnesses, beneficiaries, executrices and overseers, meaning that the form, structure and language of the document were more widely familiar. As such, presentations of will-writing in "imaginative literature" assumed not only a general knowledge of both the transactional form of the last will and testament, but also the ideas about salvation, beneficence, justice and memorialisation which were implicit within the document.[4] I further contend that people would also have understood the ways in which will-writing was gendered, both in terms of women's limited opportunities

[1] John Webster, *The Duchess of Malfi* ed. by Monica Kendall (Harlow: Pearson Education, 2004), i.1. 380; Alison Shell uses the term 'imaginative literature' and I borrow the term here to distinguish plays and poetry from other sorts of literary endeavour (Alison Shell, *Catholicism, Controversy and the English Literary Imagination, 1558–1660* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p.1-2).
[2] Ian Ward, 'Shakespeare revisited' in *Law and Literature: Possibilities and Perspectives*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp.59-89; Subha Mukherji, *Law and Representation in Early Modern Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.
[3] Mukherji, p.7; Erica Sheen and Lorna Hutson, 'Introduction: Renaissance, Law and Literature' in *Literature, Politics and Law in Renaissance England* ed. by Erica Sheen and Lorna Hutson (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005) p.11.
[4] Shell, p.1-2. See f.n.1.

to engage in the activity and the different priorities they evinced when they did so. This familiarity allowed writers to explore and exploit these gendered positions as part of their dramatic purpose.[5]

This chapter will consider examples of wills and will-writing on the early modern stage and the ways in which gendered representations of both the act of composition and the document itself are used in tragedy and comedy. Of specific interest is the extent to which female characters use their wills to enact a form of self-fashioning, and I will contend that if, as Ward and Mukherji claim, representations of legal procedures on stage reflected their use in real life, then conscious manipulation of the language, form and structure of the document as a vehicle for a character's self-realisation was predicated on the availability of the opportunity to real women. I will then discuss how the listing structure of the will was used as a mechanism to emphasise women's lack of property by reiterating its absence, thus rendering it a productive form for satirical response to women's impotence, as seen in Robert Copland's *Jyl of Braintford's Testament* and Isabella Whitney's *The Manner of her Wyll.* Finally, I will suggest that women's wills themselves can be read as literary and theatrical works through which the testatrix was able to fashion a self and exercise control over others and over her own memorialisation in ways similar to those employed by playwrights and poets.

Will-Writing in Tragedy

When the Duchess sends for Antonio in the first scene of John Webster's *The Duchess of Malfi,* she commands him to "Take pen and write".[6] However, it is not, as he believes, her accounts that she wants him to make up. Rather, the reckoning of "what's laid up for tomorrow" to which she alludes is a more distant tomorrow, "in heaven".[7] As part of this process, she is settled on

> making my will, as 'tis fit a princes should
> In perfect memory, and I pray sir, tell me
> Were not one better make it smiling, thus,
> Than in deep groans and terrible ghastly looks,
> As if the gifts we parted with procured
> That violent distraction?[8]

[5] Susan James, *Women's Voices in Tudor wills, 1485-1603: Authority, Influence and Material Culture* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), pp.1-2.
[6] *Duchess*, i.1.366.
[7] *Duchess*, i.1.371, 379.
[8] *Duchess*, i.1.380-384; i.1.261-2.

The language and ideas contained in this statement of intent echo those of wills. Although she does not announce herself through the traditional "I", her reference to her status as a princess serves the function of establishing her credentials; she presumes the right to write a will because she is a "princes", rather than "a young widow", whom her brother, Ferdinand, "would not have [her] marry again".[9]

The Duchess proves her qualification to write, announcing herself to be "In perfect memory" and affirms her intention to make her will whilst she is in good health, rather than on her deathbed. She wants to do it "smiling" rather than suffering "deep groans and terrible ghastly looks" when it would appear that giving up her worldly goods was causing her distress. For her, the writing of a will is a "care" which she would not have if she "had a husband now".[10] This introduces a paradox: without a husband, the disposition of her goods is a source of concern and anxiety whilst having a husband would negate not only the need to write a will, but also her right to do so. Her observation is designed to signal to Antonio her willingness to relinquish her unmarried position and Antonio demonstrates his understanding by commenting that he would "have you first provide for a good husband".[11] His line is flirtatious, as is his assertion that she should "Give him all", but his use of the word "provide" maintains the rhetoric of will making and signals his comprehension of the situation through the use of a shared discourse. The medium of the will allows the Duchess to speak about things that she would not be able to say, to broker her own marriage, reducing the social distance between herself and Antonio and creating an arena in which she can speak.

The language associated with wills continues as the Duchess appoints Antonio "overseer" of her intentions, in the same way that she had appointed him scribe by asking him to "take pen and write" at the beginning of the exchange,

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[9] *Duchess*, i.1.261-2. This dichotomy between the remarrying 'ordinary' widow and the chaste 'virtuous' widow were described in Thomas Overbury's *Characters* some of which were, in fact, written by Webster (Thomas Overbury *His Wife. With additions of new Characters, and many other wittie conceits neuer before printed* (London: Robert Allot, 1628), pp.L3-L5). The Duchess' refutation of the notion that she is "not the figure cut in alabaster" (i.1.458) adds to not only the funerary sense of the scene, but also to her desire to be seen as an 'ordinary' rather than 'virtuous' widow. See also Margaret Lael Mikesell 'Catholic and Protestant Widows in *The Duchess of Malfi*' *Renaissance and Reform / Renaissance et Réforme* Vol. 7, No. 4 (1983) 265-279.

[10] *Duchess*, i.1.386; The dictionary also links the word to the idea of grief, a definition which speaks to the idea of the writing of a will as a "care" ("care, n.1." *Oxford English Dictionary Online* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/27899> [Accessed 6 April 2018]).

[11] *Duchess,* i.1.391-2.

and her direction to Cariola to "overhear us" places the latter in the position of witness.[12] The Duchess gives Antonio a wedding ring as a sign of their marriage, but the performativity of the act of writing a will – the casting of roles, the following of the script, the rehearsal of conventions – stands in for the performance of a marriage ceremony. The use of language more associated with death than with marriage is ominous and foreshadows the end of the relationship of which the marriage marks the start.[13] Thus, the use of the will as a mechanism for initiating the Duchess' marriage to Antonio establishes, from the outset, the tragic denouement of the action.

Facing her imminent death in act four, the Duchess makes a nuncupative will to Cariola. The performativity of her initial will-making is replaced by more practical considerations:

> I pray thee look thou giv'st my little boy
> Some syrup for his cold, and let the girl
> Say her prayers ere she sleep.[14]

She is no longer "smiling" but more concerned with practical matters. Her requests for her children suggest that she knows that they are to die: she wants to ensure that they are prepared, just as she purported to want to be when she initiated her will at the beginning. Facing death, The Duchess consoles herself with the thought that she will "meet such excellent company / In th'other world".[15] Her preparedness is further illustrated by her instruction to Bosola to

> Tell my brothers
> That I perceive death, now I am well awake,
> Best gift is they can give, or I can take[16]

and the rhyming couplet underscores that her death is not only accepted, it is welcome: she believes that Antonio is one of the "excellent company" which

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[12] *Duchess,* i.1.387; i.1.366; i.1.362.
[13] Michael Neill, *Issues of Death. Mortality and Identity in English Renaissance Tragedy* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), p.384; Anita Pacheo, 'John Webster, *The Duchess of Malfi:* Love and Marriage in the Malfi Court', in *Reading and Studying Literature: The Renaissance & Long Eighteenth Century* ed. by Anita Pacheo and David Johnson (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2012) p.90.
[14] *Duchess,* iv.2.203-5.
[15] *Duchess*, iv.2.211-12.
[16] *Duchess,* iv.2.222-4.

awaits her. Neither is there any "violent distraction" at parting with her property as she has none to leave:

> In my last will I have not much to give:
> A many hungry guests have fed upon me,
> Thine will be a poor reversion.[17]

Her straitened state means that Cariola will receive only a "poor" estate. That "a many hungry guests have fed upon me" subverts the idea of feeding guests at a funeral feast and resonates with Bosola's graphic description of her impending death where she will become a "box of worm-see", her flesh "A little crudded milk, fantastical puff paste".[18] Her body is nothing but a container for worm food, an image which reduces her to a bestial level, whilst the idea of the "crudded milk" suggests further corruption, allied to the motherhood which she had hidden from her brothers.[19] In addition to the Duchess' body as being despoiled, the description of it as "fantastical puff paste" renders it inconsequential, frivolous or phantasmagorical.[20] In the first scene, she implicitly gives her body to Antonio, whilst now her body has been reduced to nothing. This is the corpse which she requests be bestowed upon her women, an act which, as her *de facto* executor, Bosola undertakes, once again in language resonant of wills:[21]

> I'll bear thee hence
> An execute thy last will; that's deliver
> Thy body to the reverend dispose
> Of some good women …[22]

Despite his earlier condemnation of the Duchess' physical self, he does as he is asked; it is her final request and, no matter his opinion of her, convention dictates the "reverend" disposal of her body.

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[17] *Duchess,* i.1.382, 384; iv.2.199-200.
[18] *Duchess*,iv.2.122-3.
[19] Gabriel A. Rieger, *Sex and Satiric Tragedy in Early Modern England: Penetrating Wit,* (London: Routledge, 2009), n.p. < https://books.google.co.uk/books?id=vx-oDQAAQBAJ&pg=PT84&lpg=PT84&dq=body+as+worm+food+early+modern&source=bl&ots=6jnFfNf-Tj&sig=EsmwWFbktCq6w5q0_DZ3L67sUnio&hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwj7mc-6mIbeAhWIV8AKHe_JAvwQ6AEwCHoECAAQAQ#v=onepage&q&f=false> [Accessed 14 October 2018].
[20] "fantastical, adj. and n." *OED Online*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018) <www.oed.com/view/Entry/68108> [Accessed 14 October 2018]; "puff paste, n." *OED Online* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018) <www.oed.com/view/Entry/154203> [Accessed 14 October 2018].
[21] *Duchess*, iv.2.228.
[22] *Duchess*, iv.2.368-71.

As a “princes”, the Duchess manipulates the process of writing a will as a way of proposing marriage to Antonio, using the process to initiate the action. The transaction enacted is not the disposition of property, but that of the actual process of will-writing; the written will which is projected does not appear. Facing her death, the Duchess is reduced to articulating a nuncupative will and the move from the permanence of a written document to the ephemerality of the oral one is representative of her increased impotence. Thus, the two ‘wills’ are separate entities and, in casting Cariola as witness to both, we can measure the Duchess’ fall against Cariola’s constancy.

The Duchess uses the power that her position accords her as a widow and a woman of substance as authorisation for writing a will, but Penthea, in John Ford’s *The Broken Heart* uses the form as a way of articulating and rehearsing the perceived injustices against her which she uses as the justification for her suicide by self-starvation.[23] In choosing to kill herself, Penthea exercises agency over her own life – she “falls in love with the image of herself as a tragic figure” – and this agency is reflected in the fact that, despite being a married woman, she assumes the right to write a will.[24]

Penthea’s explanation for seeking a private interview with Calantha, the king’s daughter, is riddled with ideas of her impending death: she senses that she is near to the end, that “My glass of life … hath few minutes” and claims that the remedy for the weariness of “a ling’ring life” is “a winding-sheet, a fold of lead, / And some untrod-on corner in the earth”.[25] It is as part of her preparations for death that she has written her will. Her perceived proximity to death gives her the authority not only to request the meeting with Calantha (who initially dismisses Penthea’s concerns: “You feed too much your melancholy”), but also to appoint the princess as her executrix and bid her “take that trouble on ‘ee, to dispose / Such legacies as I bequeath impartially”.[26] Her assurance that Calantha will act on her behalf is similarly evident in the way that she bequeaths her brother Ithocles to her. Buoyed by Calantha’s encouragement to “Speak the last: / I strangely like thy will” and assurance that Penthea “Do not doubt me”, Penthea

[23] John Ford, *‘Tis Pity She’s a Whore and other plays* ed. by Marion Lomax (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp.81-163.
[24] Roger T. Burbage, ‘The Moral Vision of Ford’s *The Broken Heart*’ *Studies in English Literature 1500-1900.* Vol. 10 No. 2 (1970) 397-407 (p.404).
[25] *The Broken Heart,* iii.5.9, 28, 32-3.
[26] *The Broken Heart,* iii.5.13; 37-8.

presumes the right to try to arrange a match between her brother and the princess.[27] The will therefore represents an opportunity for her to seek to exercise control over others in death, despite the fact that they are in more powerful positions than she is in life.[28]

However, Penthea is a married woman, with little property and limited power to testate, and lacks the permission of her domineering husband. To counter this, the bequests that she makes are allegorical abstractions, and her beneficiaries are emblem figures, rather than real property left to real people.[29] Thus, she leaves her youth to "virgin wives" and to "married maids", and her fame "To memory, and Time's old daughter, Truth".[30] In this latter bequest, she hopes that her fame is "I trust / By scandal yet untouched" and that "When I am fall'n to dust, may it deserve / Beseeming charity without dishonour", ideas which reflect the desire of testatrices for remembrance and memorialisation.[31] Her bequests allow her to create an image of herself – as a virtuous maid – and to appeal to others to remember her well, despite the fact that she is taking her own life. Without any property, there is no point Penthea making a will, but it is not her bequests that are important: it is the opportunity which will-writing offers her – for securing an interview with the princess, for influencing a future in which she will not be present and for self-fashioning – which is key. She seeks to counter the potential scandal attendant upon her suicide by controlling how she will be considered posthumously and uses her will to create an alternative narrative for her life.

Like the Duchess of Malfi, Penthea actually makes two wills, but, rather than being prepared at different points in time, Penthea's exist concurrently on the stage. She proffers Calantha a "paper" on which "My will was charactered", before reciting it to her, suggesting that Penthea has herself written her bequests down, presenting the written version as the authoritative one, containing the verbal one.[32] The document thus exists as a completed entity, but Penthea's narration of it allows Ford to expand on its contents. In its oral form, the will is

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[27] *The Broken Heart,* iii.5.67-8; iii.5.72; iii.5.75-79.
[28] This is something which will be considered in relation to real women's wills in chapter three.
[29] Michael Neill, 'Ford's Unbroken Art: The Moral design of "The Broken Heart"' *The Modern Language Review* Vol 75 No. 2 (1980) 249-268.
[30] See Anne Barton, 'Oxymoron and the Structure of Ford's The Broken Heart' *Essays and Studies* ed. by Inga-Stina Ewbank (London: I.D. Edrich, 1980) 70-94; *The Broken Heart,* iii.5.62.
[31] *The Broken Heart,* iii.5.60-2, 64-5.
[32] *The Broken Heart,* iii.5.45-6.

stripped of any of the traditional formal elements – there is no prelude, credentials, qualification or preamble. Penthea only outlines her actual bequests, but the missing parts are present, tacitly, in the written will which exists on the stage and in the audience's experience. The use of the word "charactered" rather than 'written' resonates with Penthea's abstracted bequests and reflects the performativity of the version which she produces "from mine own mouth".[33] In *De Pace Regis et Regni,* Ferdinand Pulton draws attention to the part which physical action played in legal proceedings, asserting that, rather than relying on an attorney to argue his innocence for him, the defendant should speak the truth for himself so that "his countenance, or gesture will shew some tokens thereof, or by his simple speeches somewhat may be drawne from him to bolt out the veritie of the cause".[34] "Charactered" thus serves to suggest how the written words were performed, assuring Calantha of their veracity through the implication of the proper attendant gestures and attitudes. This performativity is also seen in the asides through which Penthea comments on how Calantha reacts to her words. The confidence which she assumes to deliver her will is derived from Calantha's sadness: "Her fair eyes / Melt into passion. Then I have assurance / Encouraging my boldness", and the potential impertinence of her request that Calantha marry Ithocles is softened by the opportunity afforded by the nuncupative will to explain and persuade.[35] Once again, Calantha's physical response to Penthea's words – the weeping indicated by Calantha's melting eyes – emphasise the credibility and legality of Penthea's suit.

Whereas the Duchess' first will is echoed by her nuncupative one in the last act, Penthea's will is echoed by that of Calantha.[36] Although not described by her as a will, Calantha's distribution of tasks and roles leads Bassanes to suggest that it "is a testament" rather than "conditions on a marriage", in a scenario which resonates with the conflation of marriage and will-writing in *The Duchess of Malfi*.[37] The use of words and ideas associated with "death, and

[33] *The Broken Heart,* iii.5.47.
[34] Ferdinand Pulton *De Pace Regis et Regni* (London: Companie of Stationers, 1609), p.193.
[35] *The Broken Heart,* iii.5.43-45.
[36] Her death also echoes that of Penthea in the way that it is sound-tracked by the woman herself in that both choose the music to accompany their death. Philema tells Orgilus that, at the end, Penthea "called for music, / And begged some gentle voice to tune a farewell / To life and griefs", whilst Calantha instructs "Command the voices ' Which wait at th'alter now to sing the song / I fitted for the end" (*The Broken Heart*, iv.4.4-6;v.III.78-80).
[37] *The Broken Heart,* v.3.53-4.

death, and death" – "Vesta's temple", "remembrance", "solemnly", her "father's last bequest" – and the sequential losses which have been reported to her – against the setting of "[a]n alter covered with white", Ithocles on a hearse and Calantha's costume of "a white robe" – serve to underscore the testamentary nature of her instructions, which Nearchus avows "[s]hall never be digressed from".[38] The deaths of Ithocles and Calantha recall Penthea's will, so that she, too, is remembered at the end.

In these two plays, the writing of a will foreshadows the death of the testatrix, emphasising the tragedy of the narrative. However, the staging of the process of will-making can be read in a more nuanced way. The action gives both the Duchess and Penthea the authority to speak, to transcend boundaries of subject or position in order to exert their influence. As a widow, the Duchess is able to write a will and she uses this as a contrivance to negotiate her own marriage with Antonio, something which, given the desire of her brothers to control her, she would not have been authorised to do. As a wife, Penthea does not have the right to produce a will, but, by using abstractions she subverts the will-writing process in order to be able to speak more freely to Calantha than she might otherwise have been permitted. These scenes also serve to explore the relationship between the will as a written document and the verbal process which attend its production. The Duchess' verbal sparring with Antonio as she negotiates with him might not be about the actual wording of a real will, but it is suggestive of the collaborative nature of the process. Penthea's folded paper holds her bequests – no matter their inconsequentiality – but it is not strong enough to contain them; given the liberty to express them verbally, Penthea expands on them. Webster's scene has the Duchess' desires at least notionally being tamed and harnessed into a written will; Ford's has Penthea's breaking free from the constraints of the "charactered" text to be shared verbally, suggesting that wills were built on more communication than is indicated in the actual document, something which those who had been involved in will-making would have known, and which is evident in the wills of real women, as will be seen in chapter two.

[38] *The Broken Heart,* v.3.53, 59, 56, 65; v.3.stage directions; v.3.103.

Will-Writing in Comedy

If, in *The Duchess of Malfi* and *The Broken Heart*, the dramatisation of the act of will-writing serves to heighten the tragic circumstances of the testatrix, in comedies it functions as a reassurance of the expected happy ending. In these instances, however, wills written by male and female characters are used in different, gendered ways. Both Ben Jonson's eponymous Volpone and Thomas Middleton's Quomodo in *Michaelmas Term* employ wills as part of their deceitful schemes.[39] Each of the men seeks to convince people of their death so that they can secretly watch the reaction of their families and friends, and purported wills are used as evidence of their demise. Volpone's duplicitous courtship of three potential legatees results in the production of several wills; when he instructs Mosca to "open that chest, and reach / Forth one of those that has the blanks. I'll straight / Put in thy name", the extent of his deception is apparent.[40] The presence of several iterations – each one presumably written in the presence of one of the heirs presumptive as part of his plot – demonstrates Volpone's disdain for the document. This is also reflected in the fact that Jonson does not enact the actual writing of the will but uses the recitation of it as part of the following scene in which each of the spurned beneficiaries learns of their misfortune from Mosca's rehearsal of the faux inventory.[41] The listing of property for the benefit of those who have been tricked privileges the material aspects of wills and emphasises Volpone's obsession with money. The document itself is temporarily withheld from the spurned heirs as Mosca recites his bequests, until, finally, the paper confirms the catalogue, as it is read silently on stage by each of those Volpone has gulled. As in *The Broken Heart*, the will exists in both verbal and written form on the stage, Mosca's performance allowing the audience – both on stage and off – to witness its contents. In *Michaelmas Term,* on the other hand, Quomodo's will does not exist in a physical form but is merely referred to: "I will forthwith sicken, call for my keys, make my will, and dispose of all".[42] Its absence is in contrast to the various bonds and letters which are present on stage and this absence serves to emphasise its illegitimacy: Easy is able to produce a

[39] Ben Johnson, 'Volpone' *The Alchemist and Other Plays* ed. by Gordon Campbell (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995) pp. 1-117; Thomas Middleton, *Michaelmas Term* ed. by Gail Kern Paster (Manchester: Manchester University Press 2000).
[40] *Volpone* v.2.71-3.
[41] *Volpone,* v.3.
[42] *Michaelmas Term,* iv.1.95-6.

memorandum which Quomodo has signed "In witness whereof I have set to mine own hand *Ephestian Quomodo*" which underscores the non-existence of the will.[43]

Volpone and Quomodo appropriate the will as part of their trickery and it becomes the petard by which they are hoisted at the end of the respective plays. They abuse the right that they have, as men, to write a will and this misuse is part of the reason for their downfall. In their hands, the will becomes a self-serving document, one designed to be advantageous to the man himself rather than to any beneficiary, and it is this knowledge which assures the audience that Volpone and Quomodo's plans will be thwarted and that they will receive their just deserts. Mosca recognises that Volpone's will is, despite the latter's relative nonchalance about it, a legally binding document which he has signed and uses this fact as a way to force Volpone to "share at least" his money, demanding "Will you gi' me half?".[44] Unwilling to share, Volpone inculcates them both, consigning himself to prison and Mosca to a slave ship. Similarly, the memorandum which Quomodo has signed is accepted by the judge as evidence that Quomodo has no legal recourse to the land that he has ceded to Easy, substituting for the missing will and sealing Quomodo's undoing. The language is redolent of that of the will and, as such, signals the binding nature of the document and precipitates the judge's acceptance of it as irrevocable. In both plays, therefore, the pretence of writing a will enables the protagonists' scheme, but ultimately ensures that their ruses are uncovered, and the proper order of things is restored at the end.

When, in Thomas Heywood's *The Fair Maid of the West*, Bess Bridges writes a will, there is no sense of trickery; rather, the action allows for a demonstration of "female initiative and agency in interpersonal, economic and legal relations", although it also serves to ensure and signpost the expected happy ending.[45] Despite her low birth, Bess was "the / flower / Of Plymouth held".[46] As a result, she is admired by numerous men, including Spencer whose love she reciprocates, and Carroll, from whose unwanted advances Spencer

[43] *Michaelmas Term,* v.1.116-7.
[44] *Volpone,* v.5.15; v.12.62.
[45] Thomas Heywood *The Fair Maid of the West* (Oxford: Benediction Classics, 2012). This edition does not divide acts into scenes. I have treated each entrance or exit of characters as a new scene and allocated line numbers within these divisions for ease of locating references; Lloyd Davis 'Women's Wills' in Ronald Bedford, Lloyd Davis and Philippa Kelly, *Early Modern English Lives: Autobiography and Self-Representation 1500-1660* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2007), pp.203-218 (p.209).
[46] *Fair Maid,* i.1.25-7.

defends her, killing his rival in the process and being forced to flee. Spencer has already deposited money with Bess for safe-keeping; when she offers it back to him to help him make his escape, he instead leaves it with her and uses it as the basis of a *de facto* will. He takes his gold but states that

> the rest are freely thine.
> Money, apparel, and what else thou find'st,
> Perhaps worth my bequest and thy receiving,
> I make thee mistress of.[47]

In addition, he seeks to be remembered by Bess, leaving her "My picture" which he enjoins her "to keep ever".[48] Finally, he bequeaths her "a house in Foy, a tavern called / The Windmill, that I freely give thee too".[49] These bequests reflect those frequently given to widows. Here, they not only provide Bess with physical items – money and apparel – but also give her power: she is "mistress" of whatever there is. Spencer's gifts, though, come with provisos. He bids her "Join to thy beauty virtue" and "add'st chastity" in order to "o'ercome all scandal", an enjoinder through which he seeks to preserve her reputation.[50] Should she fail to maintain the "Virtue and Chastity" which "he left in charge", then Bess will forfeit the bequests which Spenser has assigned her.[51] Spencer's will is nuncupative and, although Goodlack and Forset withdraw to "sentinel their safety" whilst the lovers take their leave of one another, their presence constitutes them as unacknowledged witnesses of Spencer's intentions. Whilst his bequests are largely concerned with material goods and property, Bess' immediate focus is on the metaphorical elements – the "Virtue and Chastity" – and it is partly this which serves to foreshadow Spencer's return and their reunion.[52]

As in *The Duchess of Malfi,* this initial act of will-making is associated with marriage; Bess gives Spencer a ring as a "token of my constant love" and tells him that

> When I see this next.
> And not my Spenser I shall think thee dead
> For till death part thy body from thy soul,
> I know thou wilt not part with it".[53]

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[47] *Fair Maid,* i.12.26-29.
[48] *Fair Maid,* i.12.35.
[49] *Fair Maid,* i.12.39-40. As will be seen in chapter three, inn keeping was often the province of widows. Foy is Fowey in Cornwall.
[50] *Fair Maid,* i.12. 47-50.
[51] *Fair Maid,* i.13.9.
[52] *Fair Maid,* i.13.9.
[53] *Fair Maid,* i.12.59-63.

Again, the discourses of matrimony and death are conflated, but, unlike *The Duchess of Malfi* and *The Broken Heart*, the juxtaposition of the two signals not the tragedy of the women, but the expectation of reconciliation. Spencer's exhortation to virtue and chastity and the stated potential of Bess's ring as proof of life lay the foundations for the remainder of the play.

Later, believing Spencer to be dead, Bess determines to buy a boat and attack Spanish and Turkish shipping in revenge and composes her own will against misfortune. In order to have it witnessed in act four, she dispatches Clem to fetch the "parchment in my closet window … That with the seal".[54] Unlike Volpone's will which has to be selected from a number, Bess' is a specific document, valuable enough to have been written on parchment, and stored in a particular place within her closet. As with Penthea's will, the performance of the bequests allows the audience to hear its terms. Again, no prelude, qualification, credentials or preamble are spoken; these elements are implied, their presence assumed and taken as read. Instead, it opens with the identification of the document: "[t]he last will and testament of *Elizabeth Bridges*".[55] As a formal, legal document, Bess' full name is used: in death she will be Elizabeth. 'Bess' belongs to her life and this distinction, along with her enduring chastity and desire to be seen as "a pattern to all maids hereafter / Of constancy in love", is reflected in her bequest to "every maid that's married out of Foy, whose name's Elizabeth".[56]

Like Penthea, Bess appoints people of higher standing – in this case the Aldermen and Mayor of Foy and their successors – to serve as "faithful executors / In this bequest", and this nomination is made at the outset so that they know immediately that her bequests involve them.[57] Bess assumes the right to appoint these men and to presume their acquiescence, and uses the document to ensure that they will do as she requests.[58] She establishes several trusts, the beneficiaries of which reflect her own life and experiences: "young beginners in their trade"; "such as have had loss by sea"; "to relieve maimed soldiers".[59] These

[54] *Fair Maid*, iv.2.6,9.
[55] *Fair Maid*, iv.3.16-17.
[56] *Fair Maid,* iii.13.102-3; iv.3.19-25.
[57] *Fair Maid,* iv.3.41-2.
[58] Bess is not alone in using her will to entail men in positions of power to undertake tasks on her behalf, as will be seen in chapter two.
[59] *Fair Maid,* iv.2.37-43.

bequests are charitable; they reflect Bess' concerns, and demonstrate her engagement with civic projects, but they also represent a desire to prove her virtue.[60] Bess is making her will in good health, as a precautionary measure, and the rehearsal of it creates another opportunity for the confirmation of her integrity. This is further evident in the way that she uses her will as a way of rejecting the suit of the Mayor's son. The Alderman has already told her that

> 'T hath pleas'd here Master Mayor so far to look
> Into your fair demeanour, that he thinks you
> A fit match for his son.[61]

Bess refutes her suitability – "Enough! You see, sir, I am now too poor / To bring a dowry with me fit for your son" – and, in doing so, further underscores the "constancy" for which Mullisheg, King of Fesse, praises her at the end of the play.[62] Her gifts of money to those less fortunate than herself prompt the Mayor to announce "You want a precedent, you so abound / In charity and goodness", and so pronounce his influential opinion of her virtue.[63] Thus, Bess' employment of the Mayor and Alderman goes beyond witnessing the will; they also provide testimony to her good name. Bess not only assumes the right to entail men in positions of authority, but to use them to confirm her character. In witnessing her will, they are also sanctioning the self which she has created within it.

Despite the fact that, in the three plays – *The Duchess of Malfi, The Broken Heart* and *The Fair Maid of the West* – the portrayals of women writing wills are used for different reasons, their contribution to the dramatic intent is predicated on the fact that the form was both familiar to the audience and available to women. Webster, Ford and Heywood all employ the will as a way in which women could legitimately seek to exert their influence over others. For Webster and Ford, it serves to emphasise the tragedy of the women, whilst Heywood uses it as a way of evincing Bess' fidelity and as a written rejoinder to Goodlack's attempts to cast aspersions on it, which allows her and Spencer to be reunited at the end of the play. There is also a heightened awareness of the relationship between the act of will-writing and the physical artefact. Whilst the Duchess initiates a written document, it is not produced, and this necessitates her nuncupative will at the end. Both Penthea and Bess have already committed their wills to paper or

[60] Davis, p.210.
[61] *Fair Maid,* iv.2.16-18.
[62] *Fair Maid*, iv.2.31,32; v.11.39.
[63] *Fair Maid,* iv.3.34-5.

parchment (the difference between the materials perhaps underscoring their relative positions as wife and as heiress), and the process of composition – from oral to written – is reversed in their presentation of the contents. For Penthea, this verbal recitation of her bequests is extemporary, ideas presented and expanded on, with an eye to the reaction of her audience; there is a sense of appealing to Calantha, woman to woman, of Penthea's desire to evoke an empathetic and sympathetic reaction. Whilst Bess' prepared will is read verbatim, there is no less awareness of audience. She speaks to men in positions of power and appeals to them for their cooperation through the entailment of her bequests and for their confirmation of her good character. There is, however, no sense of the trickery of Quomodo or Volpone; although Bess' will is not needed, it is written against the real possibility of her death.

Wills as Vehicles for Satire

The Duchess, Penthea and Bess Bridges all use their wills as a way of fashioning a self, of exerting influence over others and as a space in which their voices could be heard. However, the use of wills in satirical poetry serves to emphasise women's lack of voice and control; where Penthea's bequests to allegorical figures operate as a way of situating herself with these groups, it also confirms her lack of physical property and this deficiency is the focus of satirical poems which adopt the will form as a vehicle for exploring the impotence of women. In Thomas Nashe's *Summer's Last Will and Testament*, Summer, acknowledging that he is "near my end", determines "to make my final testament".[64] He recognises that

> The surest way to get my will perform'd
> Is to make my executor my heir;
> And he, if all be given him, and none else,
> Unfallibly will see it well perform'd.[65]

Without "some issue" to inherit, his "grief would die"; rather than bequeathing his estate it would be "clean cast away".[66] He appoints Autumn as the "successor of my seat", his "adopted heir" and, despite the supplications of Winter, Christmas

[64] Thomas Nashe, 'Summer's Last Will and Testament' *The Unfortunate Traveller and Other Works* ed. by J.B. Steane (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books Ltd., 1972), pp.146-207 (p.151).
[65] *Summer's Last Will,* p.185.
[66] *Summer's Last Will,* p.185.

and Backwinter, finally makes his bequests.[67] This list opens with "Item; I give" and Summer, like Penthea, then disposes of a series of allegorical bequests: he leaves "My shady walks"; "My heat and warmth"; My short nights" for example.[68] He commits "drought and thirst" to "drunkards" and "wither'd flowers and herbs", to "dead corses", highlighting how, when he dies, other things die too.[69] His bounty disbursed, Summer uses the second half of his will to present an encomium of Elizabeth I, "that most sacred dame", leaving to her his "final days remaining" and bidding Autumn to "Be press'd and serviceable at her beck" and Winter "with thy writhen frost face" to remember that he will never look upon "such bright majesty" and should undertake not to look harshly on her.[70] This is a deathbed will and, having enumerated his gifts and intentions he dies with the words "Weep, heavens; mourn, earth; here Summer ends".[71]

At the beginning of *Summer's Last Will*, Will Summers asks "What can be made of Summer's last will and testament? Such another thing as Gillian of Brainsford's will, where she bequeathed a score of farts amongst her friends" a reference to Robert Copland's *Jyl of Braintfords Testament*.[72] This implies a commonality between the two works, hinting, but also tacitly refuting, that Summer's bequests might be as frivolous as Jyl's. Whilst some have cast *Summer's Last Will* as a 'mock testament, an example of "festive literature" which takes a form and "transforms its rhetorical conventions and strategies into the comically palpable objects of literary experience", Lorna Hutson reads Summer's suspicion about the "motives and character" of his heirs, Autumn and Winter, as reflecting anxiety about the prodigality of future generations who would spend all, rather than adding to the monies they were left.[73] As a result, she asserts "Summer's testament bears no resemblance whatsoever to the grotesque mocking testimonies of popular festival fools", which is perhaps epitomised in *Jyl*

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[67] *Summer's Last Will,* p.185; 203.
[68] *Summer's Last Will,* p.203.
[69] *Summer's Last Will,* p.203.
[70] *Summer's Last Will,* p.203.
[71] *Summer's Last Will,* p.204.
[72] Robert Copland, *Jyl of Braintfords Testament* (London: William Copland, c. 1567).
[73] Lorna Hutson, *Thomas Nashe in Context* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), p.7; 156. Chapter seven of this book gives a detailed analysis of the mock testament genre. Jill Ingram notes that the mock testament was traceable to the twelfth century and was well-known by the sixteenth (Jill P. Ingram, 'A Case for Credit: Isabella Whitney's *Wyll and Testament* and the Mock Testament Tradition' *Early Modern Culture* (2006) <http://www.earlymodernengland.com/2010/02/a-case-for-credit-isabella-whitneys-wyll-and-testament-and-the-mock-testament-tradition/> [Accessed 20 August 2018]).

of Braintfords Testament and it may be this difference which Nashe evokes in his initial comparison of the two.[74]

Jyl of Braintfords Testament is framed by a prologue in which Copland introduces her as a "merry widow", "of holy sort / Honest in substance" who "kept an Inne of right good lodging" and who calls the curate to prepare her will.[75] This prologue marks Jyl's as a nuncupative will, one which Copland is recalling: Jyl rehearses it and Copland recounts her words. Indeed, Copland acknowledges the performative nature of it when he asserts that the will has been prepared

> In her sporte and merily disposed
> After her death for a remembrance
> Thought to haue some matter of pastance
> For people to laughe at[76]

However, as well as offering "sporte" to her audience, he also acknowledges the memorialising potential of the will in seeking to use it "for a remembrance". Copland thus uses the prologue to establish not only the scene in which the will had been written, but also to reflect the idea that it was a document which could be used as an artefact of self-fashioning.

Having described the circumstances surrounding the composition of the document, Copland defers to Jyl, who presents her will. Whereas the wills of the Duchess, Penthea and Bess omit any form of preamble, relying on an assumed understanding of it, Jyl establishes her qualification to write in standard terms: she is "whole of minde now thanks to our Lord", although "I doo feel that age Dooth me oppresse" and asserts that it is right to "haue all thing in redinesse".[77] She confirms the presence of witnesses, her "neighbours", who will record "how I am penitent at this making".[78] Next, she commends her soul

> to our Lord almighte
> He hath it made, it is his owne then
> He hath it bought, it is his be right
> In heauen to be in the eternall light

[74] Hutson, *Thomas Nashe in Context* p.156.
[75] Copland, 'Prologue' ll. 3-4, 7.
[76] *Jyl,* 'Prologue' ll. 10-13.
[77] *Jyl,* ll.13, 17, 14.
[78] *Jyl,* ll.15-16.

and disposes of her body: “to the earth I bequethe my body / It is his owne I can it not deny”.[79] Her sins she commits to the “deuill” – “let him take them with him to hell / for he was the cause of all mine euill” – before setting out her intentions with regard to the worldly goods which she has to leave behind: “Heere I found them, here they must remain”.[80] She also remembers charity although, in this Menippean inversion of the genre, it is charity itself which is bequeathed to her friends, along with “all that they holde”.[81] These traditional elements, expressed in familiar language set up the satire. The audience has been told that her will was written for “sporte”, for “people to laughe at”, and the use of the will form and the audience’s familiarity with it allows Copland, through Jyl, to satirise the pointlessness of the gifts that she goes on to leave.

The ensuing list of bequests to a cast of unfortunate characters – to “him that is angry / With his freend”, to “him that selleth all his herytage”, to “[h]e that sets by no man, nor none by him” – rehearses a litany of social ills: drunkenness, infidelity, licentiousness, profligacy, impatience, and Jyl places herself in opposition to them, rather than aligning herself with them as Penthea does with her allegorical beneficiaries. Each of these unnamed individuals is left a fart – an antisocial rejoinder to undesirable behaviours, a worthless thing which represents the lack of positive recognition that such behaviours deserve.[82] The absence of materiality in the gift of a fart directly contradicts Copland’s earlier assertion that Jyl is “Honest in substance”.[83] She in fact has nothing physical to leave – no “substance” – and this lack of property is accentuated by the repeated bequeathing of a fart. These scatological bequests have no intrinsic or extrinsic value; their worth is rather in the humour that they occasion. Whilst the act of farting in front of others was regarded as offensive, demonstrating a lack of respect for the assembled company, it was a fruitful topic for puns, riddles and epigrams.[84] Conduct books forbade farting in public, but doing so became not

[79] *Jyl,* ll. 23-28.
[80] *Jyl,* ll.30-34.
[81] *Jyl* l.42, 38.
[82] “fart, n.” *Oxford English Dictionary Online* (Oxford. Oxford University Press, 2016) <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/68315> [Accessed 14 December 2016].
[83] *Jyl*, ‘Prologue’ l.4.
[84] For a fuller discussion of the fart see Keith Thomas, ‘Bodily Control and Social Unease: The Fart in Seventeenth-Century England’ in A. McShane et al. (eds.) *The Extraordinary and the Everyday in Early Modern England* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010) pp.9-29. For an example of the satirical fart, see *The Censure of the Parliament Fart,* a political libel of the 1620s *(Early Stuart Libels* <

only a source of amusement, but also a way of highlighting the fragility of respectability: a fart could undermine even the most pompous of characters, reducing the social distance between them and others through the literal blowing away of any sense of moral superiority.[85] As Keith Thomas points out, unlike other bodily functions, there is no "polite" alternative for the word which does not roam into the euphemistic; Jyl has no alternative but to repeatedly "fart".[86] Thomas further observes that "[i]t was, of course, much more shameful for a woman to be heard farting than for a man, and therefore funnier".[87] Whilst, at least initially, Jyl is not actually "heard farting", her frequent repetition of the term stands as a proxy for the act itself. Monosyllabic and fricative, the word assails the ear, emphasising its nullity and this is all the more effective for coming from the 'mouth' of a woman.

That Jyl makes her will to a curate and, in doing so, repeatedly 'farts' in front of him despite all the proscriptions against doing so in the presence of social betters, illustrates her disdain for him. Scatology had been long associated with the devil – indeed, Kent Lehnhof argues that the scatological language of John Milton's *Paradise Lost* "repeatedly connects his epic demons to digestive waste" – and the proximity of the curate and the invocation of the devil is damning.[88] Jyl's final expulsion of air – of the "winde / That causeth my bely for to grinde" – coincides with her ejection of the curate "God thou come neuer again".[89] At this point, Jyl actually farts:

> With that she groned as panged with pain
> Griping her bely with her hands twain
> And lift vp her bottok somewhat a wry
> And like a handgun, she let a fart fly.[90]

This is no accidental act; "she let a fart fly" without any attempt to contain it, simultaneously expelling the devil and the curate. To ensure that he understands

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http://www.earlystuartlibels.net/htdocs/parliament_fart_section/C1i.html> [Accessed 3rd November 2018]).

[85] Thomas, p.20.

[86] Thomas, p.10.

[87] Thomas, p.20.

[88] Kent R. Lehnhof, 'Scatology and the Sacred in Milton's *Paradise Lost*' *English Literary Renaissance* Vo. 37, No. 3 (2007) 429-449 (p.430); John W. Velz, 'Scatology and Moral Meaning in Two English Renaissance Plays' *South Central Review,* Vol. 1. No 1/2 (1984) 4-21 (p.8).

[89] *Jyl,* l.142-3; 159.

[90] *Jy,l* ll.152-5.

her contempt, she greets his reminder that "them that wri[t]e a deed, indenture or Bil … Some recompence of labour for to haue" with invective of which the "fart" is arguably the least offensive: [91]

> Nay take it thy-self, foolish sir hoball
> Sir Iohn whipdok, sir Iak whipstock
> Sir Iohn smelsock, as wise as a woodcock
> A hedge-Curat, with as much wit as a Calf
> To sit so long for a fart and a half.[92]

The list form used before to enumerate her 'gifts', is here employed to catalogue her insults. Her description of him as a "hedge-Curat" who deserves to be whipped brings her will to an end.[93] The performativity of writing a will – the dialogic patterning between the curate and Jyl which the will records – is replaced by the performance of the fart. Her wind dissipated, she no longer feels herself close to death, and forgets her earlier observation that it is good to be prepared for it in advance. Having relieved her symptoms and dismissed the curate, Jyl's adherence to the will form is forgotten. It is "but a copy of a wil" that requires no subscription of names and no "choyce of mine exec[u]tours / Of my funeralles / and surueiours".[94] It was written as "sporte" and she begs her audience "be not angry".[95]

Copland's voice returns at the end to remind us that Jyl's will has been just a story – "Thus endeth Jyl of Brainfords testament containing xxvi. farts and a half" – and he exhorts the reader to work out

> [t]he manner how for to dele most egally
> This half fart, truly for to try
> That the Curat, for his parte be no denyed
> Of the fart and a half.[96]

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[91] *Jyl,* ll.212-214.
[92] *Jyl,* ll.241-245.
[93] The term hedge-curate implies that he plies his trade under hedges or on the road side, rather than being employed in a parish or private estate church and that he was therefore a second-rate or untrustworthy curate ("hedge, n." *Oxford English Dictionary Online.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016) <http:// www.oed.com/view/Entry/85371> [Accessed 14 December 2016]). A whipstock is the handle of a whip ("whipstock, n." *Oxford English Dictionary Online.* (Oxford: Oxford University Press; 2016) <http:// www.oed.com/view/Entry/228452> [Accessed 14 December 2016]).
[94] *Jyl,* ll.183-185.
[95] *Jyl,* ll.189-90.
[96] *Jyl,* 'An exhortation' ll.4-7.

This division of the fart in two emphasises its worthlessness and thus highlights anxiety about the lack of substance. Owning nothing, Jyl can leave nothing. However, the gifts of farts are not nothing; they are a something, noxious, smelly, impolite. Copland uses the form and language of the will to emphasise Jyl's lack of property; all she can leave are the undesirable and ephemeral products of her own body. Farts are intangible and unenduring; as such they do not serve as memorialisation, and perhaps Jyl is acknowledging the fact that none of us will be remembered after our deaths, no matter what we leave behind. It is, in addition, the only return suitable for hypocrites who behave badly but seek reward and this, allied to Jyl's observation that her neighbours will be able to attest to "how I am penitent at this making" and her unceremonious dismissal of the priest, suggests a rejection of Catholic deathbed repentance.[97]

The form and language of the will is combined with elements from other genres including medieval fool catalogues and fabliau, as well as scatology to create Jyl's satire.[98] The female voice amplifies the scatology and this in turn emphasises Jyl's lack of agency: in her property-less state, all she can offer are the waste products of her body and these she uses to highlight the pretentiousness of men, and especially the curate, by reducing their actions to mere farts. Like Jyl, the nameless speaker of Isabella Whitney's *The Manner of her Wyll, and what she left to London and to all those in it, at her departing* (hereafter *Wyll*) has nothing of substance to leave.[99] She identifies herself as "serviceless" and "subject unto sicknesses" as a result of which she is unable to go "abroad"; instead, she turns her energies to reading and to learning and *The Sweet Nosegay, or pleasant posy*, a versification of Sir Hugh Plat's *Flowers of Philosophy*, of which *Wyll* is the final poem, is the result. [100]

Whitney's *Wyll* has been read in several different ways by critics. Both Lorna Hutson and Betty Travitsky categorise it as a mock testament, sharing with *Jyl of Braintfords Testament* a desire to draw attention to the "madness and hypocrisy of 'things as they are' in the real world".[101] Danielle Clarke argues that

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[97] *Jyl,* l.15-16.
[98] Mary Carpenter Erler, *Robert Copland: Complete Poems* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1993) p.177.
[99] Danielle Clarke (ed.), *Isabella Whitney, Mary Sidney and Amelia Lanyer: Renaissance Women Poets* (London: Penguin, 2000), pp.19-28.
[100] Whitney, 'The Auctor to the Reader' ll.1-2.
[101] Lorna Hutson, *The Usurer's Daughter: Male Friendship and Fictions of Women in Sixteenth-Century England* (London: Routledge, 1994), p.127; Betty S. Travitsky, "Whitney, Isabella (fl.

the way that Whitney uses the form of the will to veer from one trade or area to another is disordered "without any apparent sense of connection"; Jill Ingram counters this, asserting that this apparent lack of order is, in fact, a means of exposing "Whitney's concerns over economic stresses of the marketplace".[102] Rather than indicating the "moral barrenness" typical of mock testaments, she reads the *Wyll* as highlighting Whitney's concern with the commodification of society and the concomitant importance of credit to survival within the city.[103] Similarly, Ann Lange interprets the poem "as a remarkably overt reflection on the issues relating to inheritance for an early modern woman of no property or significant family connections by a woman who had practical experience of these deficiencies".[104] Other commentators place the *Wyll* within other legal and literary contexts. For instance, Carolyn Sale reads the *Nosegay*, as "an engagement with literary culture" at the Inns of Court and situates Whitney's speaker as an impossible testator, as defined by the Statute of Wills.[105] Like Ingram and Lange, she is concerned with questions of consumption and the "imagining [of] relations to property that break with a culture of ownership inculcated by the feudal system and then further secured by the right to dispose of land by testament under the Statute of Wills".[106] This statute would render will-writing the province of the few; Whitney's use of an unpropertied speaker instead suggests it is a "capacity to be exercised by anyone at all".[107] Wendy Wall places it alongside other examples of women's writing such as mothers' legacy texts and narratives of female deathbed scenes (and, indeed *The Duchess of Malfi)*.[108] She suggests that Whitney "transforms the legal form into an ironic meditation on property, power and desire"

1566-1573), *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) http://0-www.oxforddnb.com.lib.exeter.ac.uk/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-45498 [Accessed 4th November 2018].

[102] Clarke, p.xv; Jill P. Ingram, n.p.

[103] Ingram, n.p.

[104] Ann Margaret Lange, *Writing the way out: Inheritance and appropriation in Amelia Lanyer, Isabealla Whitney, Mary (Sidney) Herbert and Mary Wroth* (Bern and New York: Peter Lange, 2011) p.135. Lange hopes that discussing the *Wyll* as part of a discussion about inheritance and appropriation will help to incorporate it into the collection of works by early modern women.

[105] Carolyn Sale, 'The Literary Thing: The Imaginary Holding of Isabella Whitney's "Wyll" to London (1573)' in *The Oxford Handbook of English Law and Literature, 1500-1700* ed. by Lorna Hutson Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017, pp.431-447 (pp.434-5).

[106] Sale, p.444.

[107] Sale, p.446.

[108] Wendy Wall, 'Isabella Whitney and the Female Legacy' *ELH* Vol.58, No.1 (1991) pp.35-62.

and that, like the women who wrote legacy texts and accounts of women dying, Whitney found a way of using and manipulating the form to her own purposes.[109]

What all of these readings have in common is that the poem itself relies on an understanding of the form of the will. Whilst Lloyd Davis asserts that the will was a document which was used by very few sixteenth-century men, let alone women, such an observation denies the engagement that women had in will-making as witness, executrix or beneficiary through which they would have experienced the form and language of the document, even if they did not compose or write one "with mine own hand" as Whitney's speaker does.[110] Whitney relies on readers' familiarity with the conventions and rhetoric of the will, and the extent to which this is gendered. It is this facility with the custom with which I am concerned: whether *Wyll* is a mock testament or a damning indictment of the commodification of London, the choice of the form is grounded in a legal process with which people were familiar, and to which women had access in one role or another.

Like Jyl, Whitney's speaker adopts the form of the will from the outset. Her initial declaration that she is "whole in body, and in minde" echoes the traditional qualification of wills, but Whitney subverts it by adding "but very weake in Purse".[111] This, with the information that London "never yet woldst credit geve / to boord me for a yeare" establishes the possibility that the speaker has nothing of any worth to leave.[112] She is in good health physically and mentally, but not financially; the only actual thing that she can leave is herself:

> And first I wholy doo commend,
> my Soule and Body eke:
> To God the Father and the Son,
> so long as I can speake.
> And after speech: my Soule to hym,
> and Body to the Grave:
> Tyll time that all shall rise agayne,
> their Judgement for to have.[113]

[109] Wall, p.49.
[110] Lloyd Davis, 'Women's Wills in Early Modern England' in *Women, Property, and the Letters of the Law in Early Modern England,* ed. by Nancy Wright, A.R. Buck and Margaret Furguson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1994), pp.219-36 (p.223); *Wyll,* l.353.
[111] *Wyll,* l.1-2.
[112] Whitney 'The auctor to the Reader' ll.21-2.
[113] *Wyll* ll.5-12.

Where Jyl commended her soul to God and her body to the earth in a repeated formulation which seems to deny her any agency over either – "it is his owne" – Whitney's speaker claims agency over hers.[114] She will dedicate her soul and body to God whilst she is alive; once she is dead, her soul will go to God and her body to the grave against the resurrection. They may have no intrinsic value, but they are hers to give and she does so in language which closely echoes that of real wills, despite the versification.

The items which the speaker bestows are not left to the family members and kinship networks which populate real women's wills, but to London as her beneficiary. Moreover, her bequests form a critique of the consumerism of the city. However, these gifts are also gendered and reflect the domestic and personal effects of actual women: food and drink and implements for their preparation; wool and linen and silk; jewels and plate; items of clothing; beds and household goods.[115] Her legacies of cloth and clothes reflect the fact that garments were one of the main components of women's wills. They were costly; indeed, Peter Stallybrass argues that "Renaissance England was a cloth society".[116] The production and circulation of cloth meant that clothing was "a staple currency" and, as such, bequests of it were valuable.[117] Stallybrass also asserts that clothing served a memorial function; legatees wearing items intimately associated with the dead woman's body reanimated it and became moveable sites of remembrance. In Whitney's poem, it is the former idea which is evoked as her speaker does not leave individual garments, but sites of production and sale, indicating the industrial and mercantile presence of clothing within London. These include those items which were frequently grouped together in wills – the wool of "Watlyng Steete, and Canwyck streete" and the linen of "Friday streete" – but she also leaves for

> Those which are of calling such,
> That costlier they require:
> I Mercers leave, with silke so rich,

[114] *Jyl,* ll.24, 28.
[115] Clarke asserts that the conventional nature of the bequests undermines the mock testament genre: "the will is a legal document that substitutes for the processes of exchange engaged in by a living person, a form of writing which organizes the disposal of material goods" (Ibid. xv).
[116] Peter Stallybrass 'Worn Worlds: Clothes and Identity on the Renaissance Stage' in Margera de Grazia, Maureen Quilligan and Peter Stallybrass (eds.) *Subject and Object in Renaissance Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp.289-320 (p.289).
[117] Stallybrass, p.289.

As any would desire.[118]

Such items are "redolent of abundance [and] superfluity": the clothes are fine and elaborate – "French Ruffes, high Pules, Gorgets and Sleeves / of any kind of Lawne" – from "good store".[119] These were the items which women would single out in a will: they formed part of a woman's self-fashioning, demonstrating her wealth or position, and there is disdain in the speaker's assertion that some might "require" the costlier silk provided by the mercers. The wool and linen is available in the streets, implying something which is plentiful and available to all whereas the richer silk has to be procured and sold by the third-party mercers, thus emphasising the social divide not only of the purchasers, but also of the vendors as part of the commercial network that Whitney describes and to which her speaker does not have access.[120] However, whilst she might presume to leave things which she does not own, she does not step outside of the gendered nature of bequests.

Women's wills also frequently include charitable endowments, and these often remember people with whom the testatrix had a shared experience or experiences, something which was reflected in Bess Bridge's will. In *Wyll,* the speaker has been "subject unto sicknesses" so that she cannot go "abroad" and this is reflected in her gift to the sick and needy of apothecaries and physicians and surgeons who might apply "playsters", so that no "quiet persons dye".[121] Such bequests are also echoed in a concern with other ways of preventing sickness; she leaves houses where people might "bathe themselves, so to prevent / infection of the ayre".[122] She gives "portions", albeit "very small", to Newgate and the Counter, demonstrating a concern with the less salubrious areas of the city and the people who found themselves in prison.[123] However, the language – the leaving of "portions" – also echoes the wills of women who sought to ensure that their daughters were provided for. She jokes at not having

[118] *Wyll*, ll.41-48.
[119] Lange, p.142; *Wyll*, ll.63-4; 73.
[120] "In provincial towns in the early modern period, the term *mercer* was generally applied to retail tradesmen of high social status and economic importance, who had invariably served an apprenticeship and who sold a wide range of goods not produced in the locality." *Oxford English Dictionary Online* (Oxford: Oxford University Press) <http://ww.oed.com/view/Entry/116636> [Accessed 15 June 2016].
[121] Whitney, 'The Auctor to the Reader' ll.1; *Wyll*, ll.93-104.
[122] *Wyll*, ll.149-152.
[123] *Wyll*, ll.1337-8. As will be seen in chapter three, women also left bequests to the occupants of prisons.

mentioned Ludgate prison, claiming that she had left it for herself, as the place that she would go if she should be in a position where she had the ability to participate in the credit economy to the extent that she might then become a debtor. This has not happened, and, again invoking the language of wills, she "reoucke[s]" her former intention and bequeaths it instead to "some *Banckrupts*", a status to which she cannot hope to aspire.[124]

Whitney's use of the will form as a vehicle for satire continues to the end. To see her will performed, she appoints London itself as "sole executor", trusting that 'he' will "geve / the goodes unto the rest".[125] She assigns "good Fortune" as overseer, to "guide" the work and begs "(good London) not refuse, / for helper her to take".[126] London is addressed directly, and remains ungendered, but "good Fortune" is female, inverting the situation in many testatrices' wills where women were frequently named as executrices, but with men appointed to oversee the execution. This suggests that the speaker holds men and male commerce as responsible for the position in which she finds herself. Women were putatively prohibited from business; as a result, the commodification must be the responsibility of men and the oversight of a woman is necessary to put it right.

Whitney's speaker names as witnesses the accoutrements of her writing: "Paper, Pen, and Standish".[127] That the witnesses to her will were the instruments of textual production indicates that the speaker envisages a social network where the projected readership of her work will witness her textual legacy.[128] She might not boast a network of family and friends, but she claims one of readers. Whitney was unusual as a female writer in that she published her work and she makes reference to this when she allows

> To all the Bookebinders by Paulles
> Because I lyke their Arte:
> They e'ry weeke shal mony have,
> When they from Bookes departe.[129]

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[124] *Wyll*, ll.174-192. Ingram claims "Whitney is among the first to suggest that a woman's right to London's credit networks is a secular right…[a]nd she is the only woman, so far as we know, to do so by invoking the genre of the mock testament" (Ingram, n.p.).
[125] *Wyll*, ll.279-80.
[126] *Wyll,* ll.289-90.
[127] *Wyll,* l.397.
[128] The dedication of *A Sweet Nosegay* to "the worshipfull and right virtuous yong Gentylman George Mainwaring Esquier" represents an attempt to achieve patronage. *The Manner of her Wyll* implies the impending death of the speaker, but such a request for sponsorship illustrates that Whitney's ambitions are very much alive.
[129] *Wyll,* ll.193-196.

She also wills "my Friends these Bookes to bye" and has left a "store of Bookes … at each Bookebinders stall" for them to purchase.[130] Her books thus become a way of ensuring that she will be remembered, a commodity through which Whitney seeks to "create a myth of ownership to which she asks her readers to bear witness".[131] As such, the *Wyll* presents itself as "the testament of a sole testator who has in fact nothing to give and offering itself to readers as an artefact in print".[132] However, her reference to her books alongside the absence of things which she can leave emphasises the fact that she would not have control over her texts once they entered the public sphere. Still, she leaves them as a textual remembrance of herself to the London that she eulogises in them.

For the satire to work in these poems, for the wills of the Duchess and Penthea to emphasise the tragedy of their situations and for that of Bess to ensure the expected reuniting of her and Spencer, the audience had to be aware of the form, conventions and purposes of the will. These women are all fictive characters and the wills that they 'write' are, with the exception of Whitney's, actually composed by men. They are therefore authorised to write by the playwright or poet; what they leave is deemed by him to be acceptable and important and, in the case of the plays, the actions are further sanctioned by the fact that they would have been performed by a man. The familiarity of the form allowed its use as a plot device, and domestic bequests reflect the familiar content and scope of women's real wills, but even within these fictional versions there are hints at an understanding that women's wills did more than merely bequeath gendered property. In leaving her youth and fame, Penthea is selecting the qualities by which she wishes to be remembered, aligning herself with particular groups of women as an act of self-fashioning. Similarly, Bess's bequests are part of a deliberate intent to present a chaste and constant self. These examples suggest that self-fashioning was an understood facet of women's will-making. Enacting the process on stage sets up a dialogue between its usefulness as a trope, the general awareness of the form and function of the will, its gendered contents (as proscribed by law and custom) and women's use of the document as a tool for self-fashioning. If we acknowledge, as Sheen and

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[130] *Wyll,* ll.199, 241-2.
[131] Wall, p.50. See also Laurie Ellinghausen 'Literary Property and the Single Woman in Isabella Whitney's *Sweet Nosgay*' *SEL,* 45.2 (2005) 1-22.
[132] Sale, p.432.

Hutson do, that for the representation of legal acts in the theatre to be fully appreciated then we need to understand how the law worked in daily life, then it appears clear that women using wills as a way of self-fashioning was a familiar idea.

These examples from literature suggest that there was an understanding of the will as a document which not only disbursed property, but also allowed women control over how their own narratives were recorded. It was the testatrix who decided what was included and omitted and it was her voice which was heard, despite the constrictions of the legal form and the involvement of a scribe. As such, I propose that wills can be read as examples of women's writing and of self-fashioning. Just as a writer using a woman's will in their play or poem selected and created a set or scene within which it took place and cast the woman alongside others who appeared in relation to the will, so women themselves used their will to position others and to place themselves within particular spaces. In writing a will, a woman became an author; she may not have physically penned the document but, in articulating her desires, she became an 'intentional' author if not a 'scribal' one. She caused the will to be written, collaborated on its content and meaning and attested to the veracity of it, suggesting that she had at least a degree of control over its composition. Through her will, she both cast and directed others. She appointed a scribe, executors, overseers, beneficiaries, guardians and preachers and dictated their actions and responsibilities. In some cases, she even left them the scripts that they should follow, by choosing the text of her funeral sermon, for example, or by dictating the wording of a monument, or *memento mori* to be engraved on a ring. Alongside these main characters, she also cast extras – the poor of the parish, or worthy men or women – to whom she gave no lines, but who were the silent recipients of bread, alms or charity. She also cast herself, presenting the image with which she wished to be associated, selecting elements of her life to record or withhold, positioning herself within relationships and networks and alongside property.

Her cast was costumed in mourning clothes, or in the bequests of clothing which were ubiquitous in women's wills and through which she undressed her own body, describing her garments as she gave them to others. Her gifts of plate, jewellery, household implements, and furniture helped to create the *mise-en-scene* of her life. These items might have had intrinsic value, but their inclusion and description also imbued them with an extrinsic value which was contingent

on the regard in which they, and those who received them, were held by the testatrix. Through these items, we can read the *fabulae* that testatrices created of and for themselves, separate from any externally verifiable account.[133] These props recreated scenes or sets associated with the women, their rooms or their places of business, through the items contained therein, but these scenes were not static. Even when wills were written on the deathbed, there were references to previous scenes and projections forward to scenes in which the woman would play no physical part, constructing within the documents heterochronies, the co-existence of different slices of time within the text.[134] Wills were littered with gifts to be given on the day of a beneficiary's marriage, on the death of other actors, and on the coming of age of dependent children, for example, and given things were associated with past events or occasions. Closer to their own death, testatrices used wills to direct their own funerals, dictating the where and how of their burial, creating the final scene in which they would appear.

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Chapters two and three will develop the ideas of women's conscious manipulation of people and objects as part of a scheme of self-fashioning. Firstly, I consider the cast of people deployed by women in their wills; I then move on to look at the sets and scenes which were evoked by testatrices. In both cases, I argue that these are deliberately selected and enacted and demonstrate the woman's desire to fashion a self and secure memorialisation. Finally, in chapter four, ideas about the part that wills played in women's sense of self are brought together in a case study of Lucy Reynell, whose will is just one part of a concerted campaign of self-fashioning.

[133] Lorna Hutson discusses Stephen Greenblatt's inferences with regard to the *fabulae* of Shakespeare's characters in *Circumstantial Shakespeare* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015) pp.13-17.
[134] Michel Foucault, (trans. Jay Miskowiec, J.) 'Of Other Spaces' *Diacritics,* Vol. 16, No. 1 (1986), 22-27 (p.26).

Chapter Two

Dramatis Personae

By appointing Antonio to 'write' her will the Duchess of Malfi becomes an 'intentional' author. She does not pen the document herself (indeed, the will is never actually produced), but she initiates the act, appoints a scribe and dictates its contents. For the duchess, the action is a ploy, a way of initiating a conversation which she may not otherwise have been able to have, but this pattern of intentional authorship and performative co-creation is representative of the real-life experience of the vast majority of testators. Although the will was a written artefact, the process of production was largely oral: the will was spoken, heard, transcribed, read aloud and witnessed and the language of these processes was recorded in it.[1] In drama, the reading aloud of the will on stage allows the audience to attest to its contents and this reflects the processes involved in real-life will-writing where it was read to the witnesses who then verified it. The will of Joane Search of Lydney, for example, was "read and agreed upon" before it was "sealed and delivered" in the presence of her witnesses; that of Anne Cole was "committed to writing as aforesaid and Read and approved of by her"; Susana Pride's was "read and published in the presence" of her witnesses.[2] However, a will was not the unmediated record of the testatrix's words. As a legal document, her intentions were subject to a particular structure and phraseology, and to the preferences of the scribe. As such, it was a collaboration, with her words being not merely transcribed, but translated from the vernacular to the legal, moulding her ideas and desires into a form which would be recognised and accepted as a binding document.

Scribes were just one of a number of people who were cast, directed and entailed by women in their wills. This chapter will show that once we begin to see the full company of characters associated with wills and will-making, we get a fuller sense of not only the woman's involvement in the process, but also the

[1] Ralph A. Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion, and the Family in England, 1480-1750* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1988), p.91; Christopher Marsh, 'Attitudes to Will Making in Early Modern England' in *When Death do us Part: understanding and interpreting the Probate Records of Early Modern England* ed. by Tom Arkell, Nesta Evans and Nigel Goose (Oxford: Leopard's Head Press Limited, 2000) pp.158-175 (pp.162-3).
[2] TNA PROB11/270/64; PROB11/299/346; PROB11/195/43.

extent to which she could use her will to manoeuvre people using the procedural structure of the document. This *dramatis personae* comprised preachers, witnesses, executors, overseers, guardians, tutors and, finally, the self the testatrix wanted to project, the version of themselves which they wanted to be remembered. The inclusion of these characters suggests that simplistic notions of female authority being co-opted by scribes do not do justice to the content of the document or the process of creation. Rather than reflecting a straightforward process of transcribing a woman's words, wills were, in fact, merely stills of the performative act of will-making and what was recorded belies the performativity of the process of production.

Scribes

In drama, of course, the role of the scribe was ultimately performed by the playwrights themselves; the sentiments which are contained within the fictive document are those which will further the action of the play, even when the will is placed in the hands of the protagonist. In real-life, the role of the scribe in will-writing and, in particular, the influence which they may have had over the formulation of the preamble has, as previously noted, been the subject of significant debate.[3] The focus on the extent to which scribes were responsible for the wording of such elements is reliant upon the clear identification of the man who wrote it, and this, as Christopher Marsh points out, is difficult to establish.[4] Where women did identify their scribes, it was to record the payment that they made for their services. Joane Search of Lydney, for example, leaves "to Robert Maddock for his pains in writing my will the sum of ten shillings"; Mary Kent of Devizes gives "also unto Johan Dutton the younger of the Devizes scrivener for the pain in writing this my will the like sum of ten shillings"; Mary Jacob of Tavistock bequeaths "unto Richard Trowle for writing of this my will twenty shillings".[5] These references to fees foreground the commercial nature of the

[3] See 'Introduction'.
[4] Christopher Marsh, '"In the Name of God?" Will-Making and Faith in Early Modern England' in *The Records of the Nation* ed. by G.H. Martin and Peter Spufford (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1990), pp.215-249.
[5] TNA PROB11/270/64; PROB11/183/420; PROB11/233/359. Goose and Evans assert that the majority of wills were not written by lawyers "although testators who used the Prerogative Court of Canterbury were more likely to employ them". Rather, wills were written by parish clergy "and other educated men with considerable experience in drawing up a will" (Nigel Goose and Nesta Evans 'Wills as an Historical Source' in *When Death do us Part: understanding and interpreting*

relationship between the testatrix and the scribe, identifying both the person who wrote the will and the value of the act to the woman. Whilst, as Margaret Spufford acknowledges, a testatrix may have chosen a scribe who shared her religious beliefs, it was nonetheless primarily a business arrangement.[6]

In the majority of cases the only way to determine who actually wrote the will is if the scribe identified himself as such within the document. Where this happens, it is possible, as Spufford's work shows, to consider the extent of scribal influence and the ways in which particular formulations were used in specific geographical areas.[7] In this instance, the wills of Bristol offer enough data to be able to identify several scribes and looking at their wills reveals a number of shared features. However, unlike Spufford, I would argue that whilst certain scribal phrases are present, they are not used uniformly and that this lack of rigidity may have been as a result of the intervention of, or negotiation with, the testatrix.[8]

One recognisable scribe is Francis Yeomans who wrote eleven wills for women between 1635 and 1659 that we know of. Yeomans, like several other Bristol scribes, used an extended Latin date formulation, in which the year was expressed in reference to the reign of the king, and which appears to have been a local construct, as it does not appear in other wills from the region.[9] The will of Ann Goninge, for example, is dated "anno domini one thousand six hundred forty seven anno regni regis Caroli nunc Anglia vicesimo tertio", giving both the calendar and regnal year.[10] Some abbreviated "regni regis" to RRS; some expanded "Anglo" to include other parts of the king's dominion by adding "&c"; yet others omitted "Anglo" but imply the inclusion of the rest of his territory: "Regis

the Probate Records of Early Modern England ed. by Tom Arkell, Nesta Evans and Nigel Goose (Oxford: Leopard's Head Press Limited, 2000) pp. 38-71 (p. 49).

[6] Margaret Spufford, 'Religious Preambles and the Scribes of Villagers' Wills in Cambridgeshire 1570-1700' in *When Death do us Part: understanding and interpreting the Probate Records of Early Modern England* ed. by Tom Arkell, Nesta Evans and Nigel Goose (Oxford: Leopard's Head Press Limited, 2000) pp.144-157.

[7] Margaret Spufford, 'Religious Preambles' p.146.

[8] Spufford 'Religious Preambles'; for examples of Francis Yeoman's wills, see the story map at <https://uploads.knightlab.com/storymapjs/1cb1a66b0acd185a6o0fbd00c1a2816b/bristol-women-in-the-seventeenth-century/index.html> [Accessed 6th November 2018]. I am indebted to the Digital Humanities department at the University of Exeter for their help with this project.

[9] William Yeomans, John Hartwell and George Hartwell are also identifiable scribes who use variants of the Latin date formula.

[10] TNA PROB11/203/2.

Caroli &c".[11] The lack of reference to the reign of Charles in the wills of Prudence Tyson and Dorothy Child, also written by Yeomans, is not surprising, given that they post-date the king's execution, but its absence in those of Margerie Walter and Johane Jeffries, written in 1640 and 1642 respectively, is less easy to explain.[12] This variety undermines the notion of the imposition of the formula by Yeomans. If he had dictated it, then it ought to have been present, in the same form in all of his wills; that it is not suggests that the women themselves had a say in whether the Latin wording was used and, if so, the form that it took.

Another scribal phrase which occurs frequently in Bristol wills is "considering with myself".[13] However, whilst the essence of what was being considered is the same – the brevity of life and the unpredictability of the time of death – this is worded in different ways. Francis Yeoman's testatrices, for example, were considering with themselves "the frailty of this life"; "the frailty of this mortal life"; "the frailty of this transitory life"; "the frailty of all flesh" and "my frail and mortal condition".[14] For others it was "the time of death"; "the mutability and unstableness of this mortal life"; "that nothing is more certain than death and nothing more uncertain than the time thereof"; "that being now stricken in years and by course of nature cannot long live"; "the certainty of death and the uncertainty of the time thereof" and "that I am now grown in years and cannot by course of nature live long".[15] Thus "considering with myself" may have been peculiar to Bristol, and may have been used by a number of scribes working there, but it was not used identically, even by the same clerk. Neither did all the wills by a particular scribe use it, once again suggesting that there might have

[11] Blanch Yeomans (TNA PROB11/201/332) and Sarah Tanner (PROB11/210/276); Sara Pitt (TNA PROB11/182/86 & FCW 1639/40); Cecill Shuttleworth (TNA PROB11/201/689). Yeomans vacillates between "annoq" and "anno", an insignificant variation for a scribe who was probably used to using either; annoq was an abbreviation for anno qe, meaning 'the year which is' (I am indebted to Sian-Elise Ainsworth for her help in this matter).
[12] TNAPROB11/210/210; PROB11/300/138; PROB11/184/312; PROB11/190/96.
[13] I have found three other wills that use "considering with my self": Mary Witheridge or Withridge of Barnstaple, Devon, is "considering with myself the certainty of Death and yet the uncertain time when" (TNA PROB11/201/136); Edith Lane of Cheltenham is "considering with my self the fickle estate of frail mortality" (PROB11/202/605) and Richard Reynell, husband of Lucy, records, in the will that he wrote "with my own hand" that he is "considering with myself the great love and manifold merits of this divine Matie (sic)" (PROB11/165/344).
[14] TNA PROB11/264/564; PROB11/184/312; PROB11/202/276 & PROB11/206/327; PROB11/201/332; PROB11/203/2.
[15] TNA PROB11/182/86; PROB11/292/263; PROB11/270/13; PROB11/241/693; PROB11/205/57; PROB11/181/554.

been an element of testatrix choice in its deployment, and in the ideas which followed it.

Three of Yeomans' wills – for Anne Goning, Sara Pitt and Blanch Yeomans – use both the Latin date formulation and "considering with myself", and exactly the same commendation:

> first and principally I commend my soul into the hands of almighty God my most merciful father and creator hoping to be saved only by the death and passion of Jesus Christ mine only saviour and redeemer and my body I commit to the earth from whence it came.[16]

However, each of the women use a different wording for what she is considering with herself, once again suggesting that they had at least some control over the wording of this element. This formulation casts God as "most merciful father and creator", a description which is shared by Sarah Tanner and Cecill Shuttleworth, whilst Yeomans' other testatrices used different wording; to Margerie Walter, Johan Jeffries and Dorothy Child, for instance, he is "God my Maker".[17] However, neither Mary Bird nor Prudence Dorrington include a commendation at all, and this variety once again suggests a degree of negotiation between testatrix and scribe.[18]

Two other Bristol wills, those of Joan Bull and Marie Eyton were presumably written by the same unidentified scribe and use a formulation which is different from that used by Yeomans, but which is clearly scribal:

> I do willingly and with a free heart render and give again into the hands of my Lord God and creator my spirit which he of his fatherly goodness gave me when he first fashioned me in my mothers womb making me a reasonable and living creature nothing doubting but that for his infinite mercys set forth in the precious blood of his dearly beloved son Jesus Christ my only saviour and redeemer he will receive my soul into his glory and place it in the company of his heavenly angels and blessed saints.[19]

As in the case of Anne Goning, Sara Pitt and Blanch Yeomans, however, the commendation of the body is different in each case. Joan Bull states that "with a good will and sure heart I give it over commending it to the earth whence it came" but Marie Eyton adds to this the specific instruction that her body should be

[16] TNA PROB11/203/2; PROB11/182/86; PROB11/201/332.
[17] TNA PROB11/201/276; PROB11/201/689; PROB11/184/312; PROB11/190/96; PROB11/300/138.
[18] TNA PROB11/180/711; Bristol Archive FCW1645/1/43.
[19] TNA PROB11/213/562; PROB11/195/527.

> buried in Christian burial in Saint Stephens church aforesaid as near unto my late husband William Eyton deceased as conveniently may be nothing doubting but according to the articles of my faith I shall receive the same again by the mighty power of God wherewith he is able to subdue all things to himself not a corruptible mortal, weak and vile body but an incorruptible and perfect body.[20]

The women do not use scribal formulations indiscriminately but select and combine components to create their wills; even where they do employ them, there are elements which are their own. These variations suggest fluidity rather than strict prescription, with testatrices engaged in determining the detail of the wording offered by the scribe in a collaborative process.

Although the vast majority of wills were written by scribes, there was no requirement that they be so and, in the case of a will "written or subscribed with the testators own hand … testimonie of witnesses is not necessarie".[21] Without the intervention of a scribe, there was no need for anyone to confirm that what had been written actually reflected the intentions of the testatrix. Self-penned wills were extremely rare, but Ann Doddington of Bristol states that her will was "written with mine own hand" and the absence of witnesses indicates that her executrix and overseers were satisfied that she had, indeed, written the document.[22] However, any assumption that the absence of a scribe allowed for a highly individual expression of faith is confounded by Ann's conformity. Her commendation reflects Protestant confidence in salvation through the passion of Christ:

> First I commend my soul into the hands of Almighty God my merciful father in Jesus Christ his son my merciful and loving saviour and redeemer By the merits of whose precious death and passion I do assuredly hope and believe that I shall have everlasting life in his glorious kingdom of heaven.[23]

These ideas and the way in which they are expressed are similar to the wording of other women's commendations and, as Ann did not use a scribe, it reflects the extent to which this particular phraseology was known and understood.[24] Rather

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[20] TNA PROB11/195/527.
[21] Henry Swinburne, *A Brief Treatise of Testaments And Last Wills,* (New York and London: Garland Publishing Inc., 1978), p.191.
[22] TNA PROB11/198/256.
[23] TNA PROB11/198/256.
[24] Bridgett Atkins of Chippenham, for example is "assuredly hoping by the merrits and passion of his son Jesus Christ my saviour and redeemer to have life everlasting" (TNA PROB11/200/102) and Agnes Yeo of Totnes is "assuredly hoping" the same (TNA PROB11/106/120).

than use her will to present a highly individual religious viewpoint, she chose to demonstrate her orthodoxy and in doing so, indicates her clear understanding of the form and rhetoric of the will. In her discussion of women's petitions written during the Civil Wars, Alison Whiting notes that petitioners who were not able to write for themselves nevertheless had an acute awareness of the form and that this knowledge should be considered a form of literacy, and I would extend the same definition to wills.[25] Ann was literate, but she was also 'will-literate'; her will may not have been co-authored with a scribe, but it was co-authored with a socially constructed understanding of what a will was, its function and the way in which this was expressed. The knowledge presumed by playwrights who used wills and will-writing in their drama is here demonstrated by Ann in her composition of her own will, without the mediation of a scribe.

In *The Duchess of Malfi, The Broken Heart* and *The Fair Maid of the West*, the commendation of the body and soul is only inferentially present, taken as understood by the playwright and the silence of its omission is filled by the audience's familiarity with it. In *Jyl of Braintford's Testament* and Whitney's *Wyll*, the testatrices manipulate the commendation as part of the satire. They do not use a scribe, but, for the satire to be effective, they base their mockery on wording which would have been familiar, in order to make their point about the speakers' impotence and lack of property more effectively. Real-life examples indicate that, in some cases, testatrices included no commendation, scribal or self-created, yet these wills were proved and recorded regardless. Where commendatory statements are included, they may have been scribally produced, but they may also have been a product of co-creation and, even without the presence of a scribe, testatrices' own formulae, like that of Jyl and Whitney's speaker, have a high degree of congruence with traditional wording.

Scribal voices come to the fore in nuncupative wills. Here, there was frequently a fluidity between the first person of the testatrix and the third person of the scribe whose voice became audible within the will. Although the will of Anne Sertayne of Trowbridge is written entirely in the third person, meaning that her voice is absent from the document, the general pattern was that the scribe's voice introduced the will, and then recorded the bequests of the testatrix in the first

[25] Alison Whiting, *Women and Petitioning in the Seventeenth Century English Revolution: Deference, Difference, and Dissent* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2015), p.24.

person.[26] Thus, the scribe of Frances Morgan's will frames her bequests, introducing her words and confirming their validity:

> Memorandum That in the month of July in the year of our Lord God according to the computation of the church of England one thousand six hundred and ffifty nine and on or about the thirtieth day of the same month Frances Morgan of Wells in the county of Somersett widdow deceased whilst alive in good memory and having a … purpose and desire to settle and dispose of her estate did declare her last will and Testament nuncupative in these or the like words in effect following that is to say I give to my sonne Humphrey all my estate whatsoever that I am posessed of in the world and doe make him my whole and sole executor which words or the like in effect next by her spoken in the presence and hearing of the several persons whose names are subscribed …[27]

Frances' "desire to settle and dispose her estate" is scribally attributed, but the wishes are expressed as hers: she is the "I" who gives. The scribe who wrote Christian Ardington's will asserts that she "did voluntaryly use these words" before quoting what she said:

> cousin William Dymock I will give to your servant Jane Tucker my old petticoat and waistcoat for her pains taking with me and I give to your daughter Elizabeth my little box and the rest of my goods I give it all unto you and do make you my executor.[28]

In stating that he is reporting the words that she "did voluntaryly use", the scribe identifies himself as an active presence and looks to use the will not only to record Christian's desires, but to attest to the faithfulness of his record. Similarly, Anne Hurt's scribe confirms the accuracy of his work by offering a parenthetical elucidation to her bequest of "three small tenement (so she called them) lying in Chardd".[29] The will is written entirely in the third person and the scribe has taken down exactly what was said without emendation, despite the implication that he might have described her bequest otherwise. The emphasis by the scribes of nuncupative will on the fact that what he had recorded were "these or the like words in effect" indicates how important it was to attribute the words precisely to the testatrix in order to confirm the validity of their transcriptions.[30]

Witnesses

This assertion that the words recorded were those of the testatrix, faithfully recorded by the scribe is also evinced by the presence and documenting of other

[26] TNA PROB11/251/595.
[27] TNA PROB11/299/479.
[28] Bristol Archive FCW1625/1/12.
[29] TNA PROB11/245/86.
[30] Bristol Archive FCW1625/1/12.

actors in the process, with off-stage voices being recorded and forming part of a polyphonic texture within the will. Susan Large, for example, made her nuncupative will "in the presence and hearing of her son in law Mr Francis Allen and his wife of her son Mr Christopher Large and of her daughter Williamson and of her cousin Mr William Peel", placing them, albit silently, at her deathbed.[31] Catherine Thomas of Gloucester "the Relict and Executrix of the last will & testament of William Thomas of the same citty Innholder" was "in an upper chamber in the Inn called the Bell … where she dwelt and dyed", and her will includes not only her voice and the counterpoint of the legal language, but also the voices of others present at the time of writing.[32] On her deathbed, she was

> advised amongst other things by her father Mr John Banister one of the Aldermen of the Citty of Gloucs then and there present to settle her estate And being then by him asked how she would dispose thereof the said Catherine Thomas … sayd All that I have I give to my two sisters

Her father's admonition that she make her will places him at her bedside and he is audible in the question with which he elicits her bequest to her sisters. This is not, however, a verbatim report. There is a vagueness of the "other things" about which Catherine was advised by him and his question is reported, not quoted. Despite this, his presence – and his significance as "one of the Aldermen of the Citty" – and contribution to the will-making process are clearly recorded. Catherine's bequest was prompted and mediated by not only the legal form and the scribe, but by another actor in the deathbed scene.

Similarly, the scribe of Edith Button's will not only documents what she said, but also scripts the contribution of others in the room:

> In the presence and hearing of Frances Hamond Elinor Turrie and Joane Lowdall as followeth vizt the said deceased Edith Button being weak and sicke of bodie yet of perfect mind and memory lieing in the bed in the dwelling house situate in Taunton aforesaid was asked by the foresaid Frances Hamond to whome shee would give her goods To which the said deceased with an intent to make and declare her last will and testament answered in these wordes or the like effect vizt I doe give all my goods whatsoever to the children To what children said the said Frances hamond again whereunto the said deceased answering againe said I give all my goods to Robert Buttons children meaning in the understandinge of the hearers John Robert Marie Elizabeth and Joane Button children of her sonne Robert Button deceased. After which specified passed the said France Hamond asked the said deceased what she would give her sonne Nicholas Button who answering said nothing for as she like answered and said hee had no need of it, which expression the said deceased uttered and speak with an intent to make her

[31] TNA PROB11/171/165.
[32] TNA PROB11/174/523.

> will settle her estate and dispose of the goods being of perfect mind and memory as aforesaid.[33]

The detailing of the witnesses' contributions by the scribe renders Edith's will dialogic. Frances Hamond plays an active role in clarifying Edith's wishes, using questions to establish exactly what she meant. However, Frances's voice is not the only one present: that the "hearers" understood that she meant her grandchildren implies a verbal act of discussion, either at the time, or after the completion of the will, as they agreed together precisely who was indicated by "the children". The scribe's voice intrudes into the document at this point, narrating the action that has taken place, recording the agreement reached. The polyphony of Edith's will thus reflects the social nature of the deathbed, with witnesses not simply attesting to the veracity of what had occurred, but also involved in creating meaning, and the fact that their contributions were recorded by scribes suggests that they were important to the process. Rather than being silent participants in the will-making process, wordlessly present at the end of the document, Edith's witnesses are heard, their contributions recorded.

Often, there is no indication of the connection between the witnesses and the testatrix, but, sometimes, the relationship is clearly marked.[34] The will of Elizabeth Bradford of Tewkesbury is witnessed by her husband, Richard.[35] He is not residuary legatee – her brother received the bulk of Elizabeth's estate; Richard gets "my great silver Bowle and my best gold ring" – but, in witnessing the will, he signals his assent to his wife's intentions.[36] In the case of Margaret Necke, her husband, William, is not only named as a witness, but his voice also appears in the will.[37] Following Margaret's list of bequests, William wrote:

> The fourth day of March one thousand six hundred fifty six I William Necke do consent and agree to this will and will suffer the same to be proved and not oppose the same after my above named wifes decease and therein perform my covenant in this behalf formerly made with certain trustees on the part of my said wife.

Margaret has already acknowledged that she "by the consent and agreement of my husband make this my last will and testament" and that William had made a previous legal agreement with those acting on her behalf, but his permission is

[33] TNA PROB11/215/619. The name 'Turrie' is an estimation as the writing is indistinct.
[34] Christopher Marsh notes that witnesses were chosen deliberately (Marsh, 'Attitudes to Will Making', p.167).
[35] TNA PROB11/200/526.
[36] See Swinburne pp. 47-51 for an outline of how the law worked in this regard.
[37] TNA PROB11/266/166.

further verified in her will. The inclusion of his statement places William directly in the text. His appearance solidifies his consent but does so in a way that almost effaces the right which it bestows; it legitimises Margaret's bequests, but acts as a reminder that she would not have been able to make them without his permission.[38] The foregrounding of his consent means that William acts as both a witness to the document, and as an actor in the writing of it.

The inclusion of other actors in these wills emphasises the collaborative and interactive nature of will making, and this is clearly and poignantly illustrated by the wills of Marie Restall and her father, Edward, which appear next to each other in the Bristol register.[39] Marie is not recorded as witnessing Edward's will, but she appears as an actor within the document, as the addressee of his remarks. His is a nuncupative will, and it vacillates between a third person reportage of the words of the testator and a first-person address. Yet, unlike other wills, Edward Restall seems to speak directly to his daughter:

> I shall leave thee (speaking and meaning Marie Braugnell als Restall his daughter the wife of Richard Braugnell) in a good deale of trouble and pray god blesse thee, and enable the to get throw it, for Gods sake use a good conscience and let everie man have his owne due & god blesse thee

Within a month, Marie was herself "in her said fathers house sicke of the plague … whereof she dyed".[40] She is described in her will as both the wife of Richard Braugnell and the daughter of Edward Restall deceased. There is no suggestion that her husband is dead; she assumes the right to make a will because she needs to settle not only her own affairs, but also those of her father. Again, the will employs multiple voices. As in Edward's will, in addition to the third person frame and the first-person ventriloquising, there is a voice which commentates, explaining aspects of the will, again evincing the social nature of the deathbed, even in times of plague:

> Being asked by Elizabeth Protheroh what she would doe with or how she would dispose of her fathers goods (meaning the said Edward Restalls goods) to whome the said Marie Braugnell answered, I leave it to Richard Allen my father (meaning Richard Allen of the parishe of Temple aforesaid shorman, whome Manie tymes the said Marie would call father) to be my executor in trust to see my fathers will fulfilled & his creditors to have their due.

[38] This reflects the paradox noted in *The Duchess of Malfi.* The Duchess states that "If I had a husband now, this care were quit"; if she had a husband she would not need to make a will, but neither would she have the right to do so (*Duchess,* i.1.386).
[39] Bristol Archive FCW1645/3/23.
[40] Bristol Archive FCW1645/3/23.

It is not Marie who offers the corroborative information that she often called Richard Allen "father": it is the writer of the will. Both Edward and Marie's wills were witnessed by the same people, including Elizabeth Protheroh, and the shared use of these parenthetic explanations suggests that they were written by the same man, too. In interjecting these asides without revealing his identity, the scribe becomes an absent presence, unacknowledged but contributing additional information to the will. This information is intimate, suggesting that the scribe knew the testators; he understood who Marie meant by "Richard Allen my father". These contributions render the wills polyvocal: Edward speaks directly to his daughter; this intention is made clear by the explanatory interjection of the scribe; Elizabeth Protheroh's interrogations are reported; the scribe narrates; Marie's words are quoted; the scribe interjects once more, resulting in wills which are dialogic and interactive, and more complex than a binary testatrix/scribe model. The inclusion of these voices in the will reconstructs the exchanges which took place around the action of will-writing and (re)creates the scripts which the participants produced in the preparation of the document.

The polyvocality of wills underscores the importance of the aural and oral in their composition, something which is also demonstrated by the prevalence of references to hearing and speaking in the documents, and this highlights the role that witnesses played in establishing the veracity of the written document. The will of Elizabeth Lugg, for example, emphasises the audibility of her words. She, "by way of making her will by word of mouth [did] say and deliver with an audible voice the words following or the very like in effect".[41] It is not enough that she said the words; attention is also drawn to the fact that they were heard as part of a strategy for ensuring that her intentions were legitimised; they had been clearly heard by the witnesses. This stress on the aural means that, where women were unable to express themselves vocally, scribes had to record other ways in which the testatrix signalled her wishes to those present. Thomazine Halswell of Wells, Somerset, for instance, was too incapacitated to articulate her intentions to "Mr Thomas Woodyate the parson of Corton Denham" who attended her deathbed; instead, he offered her suggestions as to the disposition of her goods, to which she acquiesced non-verbally:

[41] Bristol Archive FCW1645/1/6.

> Mr Thomas Wodyate … further asked and demanded of her if it would please her to bestowe ten or twentie pounds uppon her servant Hester Addams and if she would do so that then she would hold upp her hand unto that effect, the said Mrs Thomazine Halswell as consenting and in answer thereunto did hold upp her hand accordinglie, and then againe the said Mr Woodyates asking her if she would be pleased to bestowe the rest or residue of her estate upon her late husband Mr Hugh Halswalls children, and being intreated that if she would so doe, she should lift upp her hands in token or manifestation thereof or to that effect she the said Mrs Halswell being of perfect mind and memorie, and well understanding the demand question or speech made unto her and as in answer and signifyinge her consent thereto and will therein did presentlie hold upp both her hands or speeches words demonstrations and passages were used and passed between the parties above said to that effect in the presence of divers credible witnesses.[42]

Here, the scribe takes pains to describe the 'dialogue' which had taken place between the parson and the testatrix, emphasising Thomazine's understanding of what she was agreeing to, both through her qualification to will – her "perfect mind and memorie", but also through the quasi synonymous list of words used to describe the actions. These were oral acts – the "demand question or speech" – but her responses are physical, and these gestures are then re-rendered as verbal through the "demonstrations and passages" which "were used and passed between the parties". The actions of the testatrix in response to the verbal requests from the parson were re-verbalised by the attendant "credible witnesses" into 'credible' responses. The scribe's recasting of gesture as speech validates the will. He does not merely take down or report the words that the testatrix said – there were none. Rather, his role was to formulate the exchange that did take place into a legal document. Thomazine would not have specifically instructed him to do so, but there was an implicit understanding of the role of the scribe which is played out in this will. A testatrix, in appointing or being represented by a scribe, expected them to make manifest her desires in such a way that it would ensure that they were legally binding; that Thomazine's will was proved confirms that his strategy was successful.

The nature of near-death will-writing meant that, from time to time, the document was started when the testatrix was alive, but completed after her decease. Once such example is the 1635 will of Ellenor Woodward, written by Robert Deane, a Bristol notary public.[43] It is a long and complex document, involving deeds, covenants and indentures and these bequests end with the usual statement "In witness whereof I the said Ellenor Woodward have to this my present last will and testament put my hand and seal dated the day and year first

[42] TNA PROB11/152/522.
[43] TNA PROB11/167/506.

above written". However, at this point, Deane has to enter the document and acknowledge that the will "was conceived and put in writing by Robert Dean notary public … according to the instructions the same day given by the said Ellenor and short notes thereof taken in writing" by him, but that "a little before or as soon as the said will was finished and put in writing the said Ellenor the said nineteenth day of January did decease". As a result,

> the said will was not read unto her nor did she put her hand or seal thereto but because we know that the said will was made and put in writing as aforesaid according to the said instructions and notes given by the said Ellenor and taken by the said Robert ~~Deane~~ in our presence as aforesaid we testify the same to be the last will and testament of the said Ellenor Woodward

Knowing that these were indeed Ellenor's intentions, the witnesses signed the will. Robert Dean is forced to appear in the text, to explain the process by which it had been drawn up in order to confirm the legitimacy of it. He draws the witnesses in with him, segueing from the third person singular, to the first-person plural as "Robert Dean notary public" becomes the "we" who had signed the will. The witnesses' engagement in the will making process is foregrounded by the scribe, describing the steps that had been taken by them in order to render the will legally binding, making transparent the role which was more generally hidden behind their name, or mark, at the end of the page.

Although the contribution of witnesses was generally restricted to and recorded in this final signature or mark, there are examples where they feature more actively in the document and where their contribution to the process was recorded. In witnessing his wife's will, a man indicated that he had given her permission to write; in the case of Margaret Necke, this implicit permission is emphasised through William's appearance in the actual document. Other wills reveal the extent to which witnesses fulfilled a practical role in the will-making process, soliciting responses, offering corroborating information, collaborating with the scribe to ensure that the testatrix's wishes were represented in a form which would be legally acceptable. The choice of witnesses gives information about the woman's social and kinship circles, but the signs, signatures and names which appear at the end of wills belie the extent to which witnesses might have been involved in the process and the importance of this participation is illustrated by the pains which scribes took to record their words. Rather than being

passive observers of the process, witnesses were often active actors in it and, as a result, a testatrix's casting of witnesses was an important aspect of will-making.

Preachers

In appointing a scribe, testatrices entered into a contract with them; they commissioned a will and the completion of the document was confirmed by the signatures or marks of the women themselves, and of their witnesses, and sometimes made visible through the stipulation of payment for the service. However, women's wills included other contracts, ones which they would not see satisfied and for the fulfilment of which they had to rely on the oversight of executors, and which demonstrate the ways in which women used their wills to direct others.

One such contract was that between the woman and any preacher appointed to deliver her funeral sermon. Although the changes to the doctrine of purgatory which defined the Reformation caused some Protestants to treat funeral sermons with scepticism, considering them as lacking scriptural basis, as being sullied by Catholic preaching, based in pagan eulogy and liable to flatter the individual being described, high attendance at funerals made them irresistible places to teach.[44] Where, before the Reformation, sermons were used to educate about purgatory, after the 1530s they were "intentionally used to teach reformed doctrine" and could serve to "teach against such popish beliefs" as "memorial masses and prayers for the dead", and this pedagogical endeavour was served by the recognisable pattern which funeral sermons followed.[45]

They opened with a discussion of the nominated scriptural passage, one which reflected the traditional *ars moriendi* messages of the brevity of life, the uncertainty of the time of death, the trial of dying and the necessity of living in a perpetual state of preparedness against the event. This was followed by an exposition of the ways in which the biblical passage should be interpreted and the relevance of it to the auditor. Having instructed the congregation, the priest would then proceed to apply the message to the deceased and to speak about their life and example, to "expound[ed] on how real women had matched up to

[44] Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion, and the Family,* p.297; Eric Josef Carlson, 'English funeral Sermons as Sources: The Example of Female Piety in Pre-1640 Sermons' *Albion; A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* 32.4. (2000) 567-597 (p. 573).
[45] Carlson, p.569-70.

these standards".[46] In order to avoid accusations of flattery, there was often a rhetorical 'gear change', a deliberate and acknowledged shift from the scriptural to the personal, with the deceased's biography being appended in a "lean to".[47] Stephen Denison, for example, bridges the gap between his treatment of Job and the discussion of Elizabeth Juxon explicitly: "The occasion of this Sermon (as you know) was for the celebration of the funeral of that excellent seruant of God Mistris *Elizabeth Iuxon,* the late faithfull wife of Master *Iohn Iuxon* citizen of this famous Citie of *London".*[48] This hagiographic section was usually shorter than the first part, with the obvious shift between preaching and praise allowing preachers to distance themselves from their subject as they sought to "deflect criticism by deprecating themselves and their efforts" and thus to avoid accusations of improper adulation.[49] These encomiums were gendered, with men praised for their leadership, good management, bravery; the qualities which were celebrated in women were those which conformed to male expectations of female chastity and behaviour.[50] Young women were celebrated for their godliness; married women were fêted for their private and public religious habits; widows were exalted for their self-sufficiency and rejection of frivolity in favour of a godly life.[51] These were the ideals established by conduct manuals, and funeral sermons "expounded on how real women had matched up to these standards", although, as Elizabeth Hodgson argues, this gendered acclamation ran the risk of

[46] Ann Laurence 'Women, Godliness and Personal Appearance in Seventeenth-Century England' *Women's History Review* 15.1 (2006) 69-81 (p.70).
[47] Patrick Collinson, '"A Magazine of Religious Patterns" An Erasmian Topic Transposed in English Protestantism', *Godly People: Essays on English Protestantism and Puritanism* (London: Hambledon, 1983), pp.499-525 (p.523).
[48] Stephen Denison *The monvment or tombstone or a sermon preached at Lavrence Povntes Chvrch in London Nouemb. 21 1619 at the funeral of M^rs^ Elizabeth Iuxon, the late wife of M^r^ Iohn Iuxon* (London: George Miller, 1631).
[49] Raymond A. Anselment, 'Anthony Walker, Mary Rich and Seventeenth-Century funeral Sermons of Women' *Prose Studies* 37.3. (2015) 200-224 (p. 204). See also Frederic B. Tromly, '"Accordinge to sounde religion": The Elizabethan Controversy over the Funeral Sermon', *Journal of Medieval and Renaissance Studies,* 13 (1983) 293-312.
[50] Femke Molekamp, 'Seventeenth-century Funeral Sermons and the Exemplary Female Devotion: Gendered Spaces and History" *Renaissance & Reformation/Renaissance Et Reforme* 35.1 (2012) 43-58.
[51] Jeanne Shami, 'Women and Sermons' in *The Oxford Handbook of the Early Modern Sermon* ed. by Hugh Adlington, Peter McCullough and Emma Rhatigan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011) [Accessed 6 May 2016]. For a discussion of women's funeral sermons, see also Peter Lake, 'Feminine Piety and Personal Potency: The 'Emancipation' of Mrs Jane Ratcliffe' *The Seventeenth Century,* 2:2 (2013) 143-165.

reinventing “Foxe's public martyrs as private, domestic and domesticated saints” by de-individualizing its subjects within “paradigms of domestic piety’”.[52]

Funeral sermons were expensive, and, outside of members of the elite whose preparations for interment might take several weeks, the majority of funerals took place within two days of death, which meant that local priests had very little time in which to prepare.[53] Nonetheless, as Peter McCullough demonstrates, early modern sermons were important, representing “radically occasional pieces of performed writing, contingent upon the contexts in and for which they were delivered”, and those presented at funerals in particular offered the opportunity for illustrating not only the qualities of the deceased, but also the messages of a good death.[54] However, the printed sermons which endure, as McCullough points out, fail to adequately reflect the “drama of how a sermon actually unfolded in delivery with the preacher’s strategic deployment of structural parallelisms; highs and lows of emotion wrought by shifts in tone, syntax, and diction; and the often gradual evolution of argument”. [55] Those sermons which were published, by the family of the deceased or the priest who preached them, lack these nuances of performance, but the readership who purchased them would have understood how the printed script would have been realised in the preaching and the relationship between text and enactment.

Whilst it is sermons written for wealthy women which endure, they were not the only ones which were composed and performed and, in requesting a sermon in her will, a woman was in fact commissioning a performance of her life, set within the theatre of the church, to be heard by an audience of her family, friends and peers. The instigation of such a performance did not always name a specific preacher, perhaps in the assumption that the local priest would oblige. Liddia Reade, Pruence Vennan and Elizabeth Welsteed of Bristol, for instance, all left money to the “minister that (which) shall preach (at) my funeral (sermon)”, with no further stipulation.[56] In these cases, the act of preaching itself is given

[52] Laurence, p.70; Elizabeth Hodgson, ‘The Domestic “Fruite of Eves Transgression” in Stuart Funeral Sermons’ *Prose Studies* 28/1 (2006), pp.1-18 (p.2, 8).
[53] Peter McCullough ‘Preaching and Context: John Donne’s Sermon at the Funerals of Sire William Cokayne” *The Oxford Handbook of the Early Modern Sermon* ed. by Hugh Adlington, Peter McCullough, and Emma Rhatigan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp.213-264 (p.218).
[54] McCullough, p.213.
[55] McCullough, p.214.
[56] Bristol Archive FCW1634/4/2; FCW1635/4/20; TNA PROB11/270/13.

primacy; the 'who' is of secondary importance. Others name a priest. Katherine Rodman of Stapleton, Gloucestershire, paid "unto the preacher of my funerall sermon tenn shillings Mr Yeoman of St Phillipps is the man whome I doe make choyce of please him".[57] Here, Katherine's appointment of Mr Yeoman is softened with "please him". She names him, but acknowledges his right to deny, or be unable to comply with, her request. In many cases, there was no expectation that the woman's choice of preacher would be problematic and the inclusion of a fee for the task implied an obligation to undertake the duty. Both Jane Robarts and Christian Hill of Poole, Dorset, appoint Mr Swithin Cleeves to preach their funeral sermon, giving him 13s 4d and 20s respectively.[58] The latter amount is similarly left by Anne Punchard of Barnstaple on condition "that Mr Blake vicar of Barnstaple do preach at my burial and I do give him for his pains twenty shillings", and by Blanch Squibb of Truro "unto Mr John Tickomb minister of Truro to preach my funeral sermon.[59] Joane Meire of Minehead offers a more modest eight shillings to Mr Elliott for the same service, but Sara Hawker's payment "to Mr Doctor Seward of Yeovil forty shillings to preach my funeral sermon" illustrates the range of remuneration that the office attracted.[60] Although Mary Polden of Bristol names a preacher, she allows that a substitute might be needed. She does not specify who that should be, but leaves the choice to her executor, trusting him to make an appropriate selection should her nominated preacher not be available:

> I give and bequeath to Mr Abell Lovering minister the sum of forty shillings to be paid unto him if he shalbe in Bristol at the time of my funeral to be performed and shall then preach my funeral sermon And if it shall happen that the said Abell Loving shall not preach my funeral sermon then my will is that the said forty shillings so intended to be given unto him shalbe given unto some other minister whom my executor shall make choice of for that purpose.[61]

Other women named a second preacher, should their first choice be unavailable. Sarah Brown of Gloucester, requests burial in the cathedral there, appointing that "to my buriall a funeral sermon to be made by some holy preacher and Mr Holford to performe it if he be then living and may be had, if not then Mr Marshall And to

[57] TNA PROB11/159/199.
[58] TNA PROB11/183/260; PROB11/189/428.
[59] TNA PROB11/165/137; PROB11/251/370.
[60] TNA PROB11/274/106; PROB11/174/45.
[61] TNA PROB11/148/423.

him that shall performe it I give the some of three pounds" naming Mr Marshall as understudy lest her first choice be dead or otherwise engaged.[62]

As with scribes, a comparison of wills from Bristol allows us to identify where women chose the same preacher and the popularity of certain individuals suggests their talent as eulogisers. Two names in particular occur in several wills: Anne Warren and Mary Butcher request funeral sermons preached by Mr Till-Adams; Johane Jeffries and Em Symons ask for Mr Henry Jones.[63] Edith Charlton nominates Mr Till-Adams, with Henry Jones as a reserve in case the former is unable to oblige.[64] These women all came from different parishes within the city – St. John the Baptist, St. Stephen's, St. Nicholas' and St. Werburgh's – suggesting that John Till-Adams and Henry Jones were known across the city.[65] If these men were not their local ministers, the testatrice's choice of them may well indicate a preference based not on a particular pastoral relationship, but on an expectation of an effective oratory. For these women, it was not enough to be eulogised: they expected it to be done to a certain standard, and John Till-Adams and Henry Jones set it.

Edith Charlton names not only John Till-Adams and Henry Jones in her will, but also a more extensive cast of ministers, which she divides into two groups.[66] She leaves "five pounds a piece" to "Mr Richard Towgood Mr John Till Adam and Mr Stanfast" and "three pounds a piece" to "Mr Jones Mr Pownall Mr Brynt Mr Prichard senior and Mr Williamson". Finally, she gives "unto doctor Howell late Bishop of Bristol and Mr Brereton unto each of them the sum of five pounds". Edith spreads her beneficence around the city, but, in her bequests to the preachers, she creates two categories, those who are worth five pounds, whose first names she includes, and those worth three, who are listed only by their surnames. These bequests demonstrate that there was an economy of preaching within the city; Edith Charlton uses her will to provide charity to the church in a private capacity via her gifts to the named preachers, and the commission of John Till-Adam and Henry Jones by several women indicates a shared appreciation of their qualities as speakers.

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[62] TNA PROB11/198/345; (Gloucestershire, England, Wills and Inventories, 1541-1859 *Ancestry.co.uk* 2244141).
[63] TNA PROB11/183/519; PROB11/242/11; PROB11/190/96; PROB11/242/121.
[64] TNA PROB11/206/327.
[65] Anne Warren's will makes no reference to the parish within which she lives, nor any request for burial in a particular place.
[66] TNA PROB11/206/327.

These women thus used their wills to direct a performance, sometimes casting a specific minister to deliver it, but trusting them to choose the text upon which the sermon was based. However, Ann Doddington inverts this pattern, leaving "the sum of two pounds of lawful money of England" to whichever preacher should undertake to preach on her behalf, but requesting a particular text: she "desire[s] the text of this sermon maybe the first verse of the sixty second psalm which is My soul truly waiteth still upon God for of him cometh my salvation". The wording given echoes that of the King James Bible – "Truly my soul waiteth upon God: from him cometh my salvation" – rather than the Geneva Bible – "Yet my soul keepeth silence unto God: of him cometh my salvation" – but the inaccuracy suggests that Ann was recalling it from memory, rather than copying it when writing her will.[67] Her act of choosing her own text notwithstanding, there is an economic exchange between Ann and the preacher, but her request suggests a more collaborative arrangement than the simple ordering of a sermon. In selecting the passage to be preached on, she provides the outline script for the priest, on which he would extemporise, thus commissioning and directing his performance in her name.

Requesting a funeral sermon meant entering into a contract with a minister, a contract which the testatrix would not live to see fulfilled. It represented a financial commitment – she might "desire" a sermon and "give" or "bequeath" the fee for it – but the contract existed nonetheless; leaving payment for the service commodified preaching, placing a monetary value on it. The choice of a particular minister might have reflected a personal, pastoral relationship between the two, but it might also have represented a desire to use someone with a particular facility with the form, to be memorialised and eulogised by a man with an acknowledged skill for sermonising, thus instigating a performance.

Executors

The executor of a will was responsible for ensuring that the testatrix's estate was dissolved according to her wishes, applying to the court for permission to administer it, settling her debts, dispersing the gifts given and keeping an account of his or her own activities in the performance of that duty. There were no

[67] Sylvia Brown comments that Elizabeth Joscelin's approximation of verses from the Geneva Bible "suggests that she was working from memory", in a similar way to Ann (Sylvia Brown, W*omen's Writing in Stuart England: The Mothers' Legacies of Dorothy Leigh, Elizabeth Joscelin and Elizabeth Richardson* (Stroud: Sutton Publishing Limited, 1999), p.98).

particular stipulations about who should serve as executor, and Swimburne allows that "Euery one may be executor which is not forbidden", including "bonde men or free", "ley men" and "clearkes", "women", "infants" "either knowne or unknowne persons" and that a testatrix could appoint "one person or many".[68] In practice, women frequently served as executrix of their husband's will, and, where women were widowed several times, this could lead to a significant investment of time and energy on her behalf. In some respects, this was an expedient choice, as executrices were often residuary legatees who received any estate after the testator's specific bequests had been fulfilled, and this meant that widows were well provided for, thus preventing them from becoming a burden on the parish.[69] In their own wills, women frequently named one of their children as executor and were more likely than men to appoint a daughter to the role. Their choice was often dictated by perceptions of need, but it also demonstrated faith in a daughter's ability to take control of finances.[70] Thus, for example, Agnes Blacker of Totnes leaves household items to her son, money to two of her daughters and the residue of her estate "jointly to my daughters Anne Agnis and Sara whom I make my sole executrixes jointly".[71] These are her unmarried daughters, and, in appointing them as executrices the resultant responsibility was balanced by the rewards that receiving a third share of the residual estate would bring, ensuring that they were provided for. Catherine Rawlins, a spinster of Tewkesbury, gives money to her brothers, but makes her cousin, Ann Draking, "my whole executrix of this my last will and testament and of all my goods chattles and implements of household unbequeathed my debts legacies and funeral expenses discharged".[72] She eschews her male relatives in favour of a more distant, but female, one. Similarly, Mary Rouch of Hawkesbury in Gloucestershire appoints her niece "Mary Rouch daughter of my brother Robert Rouch to be my sole executrix of this my last will and testament unto whom I give all the rest of

[68] Swinburne, p.195.
[69] Houlbrooke, p.136.
[70] Susan D. Amussen, *An Ordered Society: Gender and Class in Early Modern England* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), p.92. Amussen asserts that women were more likely to respond to the perceived needs of their children than were men, and to make provision accordingly, rather than following prescribed hierarchies.
[71] TNA PROB11/301/398.
[72] Gloucester, England, Wills and Inventories, 1541-1858. *Ancestry.co.uk* 224144.

my goods", despite the fact that she has nephews whom she could have chosen.[73]

It was not only younger relatives who were made residual legatees. Frances Cossworth makes financial bequests to a whole range of cousins, sisters, nieces and nephews, but it is her mother whom she appoints as executrix, and Joane Marsh(e) of Padstow also makes her mother executrix, despite the fact that her husband is alive and is to receive "two pieces of gold of the value of 20s each of them".[74] These arrangements perhaps demonstrate their faith in their mothers, but also suggest that they wanted to ensure their mother's futures, once again avoiding reliance on parish support. Whatever their motivation, the employment of women as executrices, even when there were eligible men, created a gendered community in which female relatives were not just beneficiaries, but were trusted to observe and safeguard the testatrix's wishes.

In some cases, women used their wills to entail their executors to duties beyond the distribution of their property, addressing the potential want or hardship not of the executors, but of other beneficiaries. Elizabeth Maie of St. Austell entails her brother, as her executor, to take care of their mother, by giving "unto my mother (if my Executor hereafter named doe not keep her & maintaine her himself) ten pounds to live at any other place at her pleasure".[75] Her brother is to receive the residue of her estate, but, by withholding ten pounds a year, Elizabeth hopes to place him under a moral duty to take care of their mother. The will was a semi-public document and, by publishing this obligation, she seeks to apply external pressure in order to ensure his cooperation. Similarly, Joan Smith of Tavistock stipulates that her executor "shall find and maintain the said Johane Peeke sufficient meat drink apparrell washing and lodging and all other things to her necessary and meet as well in sickness and health during her natural life at his own cost and charge".[76] Once again, her executor receives the residue of her estate, but this bequest is contingent upon his provision for Johane Peeke. Ann Doddington likewise requires that her executrix undertake the care of "my fool

[73] Gloucester, England, Wills and Inventories, 1541-1858. *Ancestry.co.uk* 224351. It is not clear of the ages of the children, but, given that underage children were available as a choice, Mary's appointment is a deliberate one. Swinburne states that "the testator hath power to appoint executors, not onely persons of ful age, but also infants" (Swinburne, p.196).
[74] Cornish Record Office AP/C/1003; TNA PROB11/233/242. Mary Polden of Bristol, in contrast, follows the traditional pattern and appoints her husband as executor (TNA PROB11/148/423).
[75] Cornish Record Office AP/M/404.
[76] TNA PROB11/161/426.

Jone Raymond", providing ten pounds a year for her to do so, but further hoping that she "will be very careful of her", creating an informal contract which goes beyond the financial.[77] Through it, she seeks to create an ongoing personal relationship between the two, which would replace the one which she had with Jone: "my fool Jone Raymond" would become 'Margaret's fool Jone Raymond' as Ann passes not only Jone's care, but almost Jone herself, to her executrix. These women balanced their gifts to their executors with a presumption of continued charity on their behalf, and, in doing so, commodified the individuals concerned – they were another 'thing' to be taken care of by the executor – but also presumed the right to exert control over their executors, albeit in the name of their beneficiaries.

Being appointed as executrix implied a relationship of trust and faith between the two parties, but some women like Joane Weale of Bristol also evoked deleterious consequences should their executor fail to comply with their wishes. She states:

> All the rest of my goods and chattles whatsoever moveable and unmoveable plate and other things whatsoever herin not before given and bequeathed my debts and legacies being paid and funeral expenses discharged I give and bequeath unto my said son Geofry Weale whom I do make full and whole executor of this my last will and testament making no doubt but he will perform this my last will and testament in all things acording to my true meaning which I charge him to do upon my blessing and as he will expect any blessing from the hands of God.[78]

Her son would receive the remainder of her estate, but her lack of "doubt" that he will "perform" her will "according to my true meaning" comes with the implicit threat that, if he does not do so, he will not receive the expected "blessing from the hands of God". In her absence, she relies on her son's desire to achieve benediction as a secondary inducement, after his duty to his mother, to ensure that her desires are fulfilled. Cicile Gunning goes further, actively warning her executrix, her sister, of what would befall her should she fail to ensure that the wishes of the deceased were followed to the letter:

> She shall not bestow distribute or give away the same or any part thereof to anyone of her said children before she make a general division and distribution thereof nor give the same to any other persons other than her said children last before named as she shall answer at the dreadful day.[79]

[77] TNA PROB11/198/256.
[78] TNA PROB11/164/490.
[79] TNA PROB11/161/251.

Cicile will not be there to ensure that her sister does what she asks; she therefore invokes a higher power. Without the capacity for physical, earthly redress for any failure to fulfil her requests, she reminds her "sister Marlow", that, ultimately, she will have to answer for her actions to a higher court than the one in which the will will be proved as an inducement to secure her compliance. A similar threat is made by Mary Collier who warns her executor, her son Thomas Shuter, to see the office "duly and fully performed in all things … as he will answer at the dreadful day of judgement".[80]

In *The Duchess of Malfi, The Broken Heart* and *The Fair Maid of the West,* the role of executor is cast but, with the exception of Bosola's delivery of the Duchess' body to her women, none of the appointees is called upon to actually execute the wills of the testatrices. In real-life, the role of executor was vital in ensuring that the testatrix's intentions were fulfilled but some women went further, using their wills to exploit it, and the rewards attendant upon it, requiring their appointee to undertake more than the simple distribution of property. These examples demonstrate how delicately poised the balance of power could be between the testatrix and executor, with wills offering a means of making spiritual or moral threats that held the latter to the woman's wishes. This is similar to women's attempts to exercise economic control over preachers, who were paid and negotiated with, as well as being coaxed into being allies. Like preachers, executors were cast and directed by the testatrix and were rewarded (or threatened) for their pains.

Overseers

Whilst the executor of a will undertook the process of settling the terms of the will, overseers were tasked with holding the executor to account and by appointing them testatrices were able to add an extra layer of security to ensure that their wishes would be fulfilled. The presence of overseers allowed testatrices to select their daughters as executrices, thus guaranteeing their financial futures, but to require others to assist in the business of settling the estate and preventing potential dispute. Emme Tracey of Bideford, for example, nominates her three younger daughters as executrices, but casts her sons-in-law as overseers, to make sure that the girls did not fall out over the division, urging them "peaceably

[80] TNA PROB11/201/602.

and quietly without any striving to content themselves according to the true intent and meaning of this my last will and testament".[81] Likewise, Elizabeth Secill instructs that:

> in case any dissention or dischord shall hereafter arise between my said joint executrix or between them and my said sons or any of them then my will is that they repair to my said overseers whom I desire upon hearing of the differences between them to put an end therein that none of their means be spent in law or contention but that they all agree and live together as becometh brothers and sisters.[82]

Like Emme, Elizabeth directs her overseers to prevent her children from quarrelling, partly to avoid the financial costs inherent in legal proceedings which might arise as a result of dissention amongst them, but also that they might behave themselves familially. Thus, Elizabeth's commission is of both overseers and arbitrators, encouraging her children's cooperation.

In undertaking this additional role, Emme and Elizabeth's overseers were unofficial proxies for the women, delegated to supervise the affairs of their families and, in some cases, women went further, giving their overseers responsibility for the care and upbringing of their children. Alice Thompson entrusts hers, in addition to supervising the performance of her will, to have the care of "my sons and daughters during their minority"; Martha Tomlinson's overseers are to see to the provision of the maintenance and education of her children at their discretion, out of their portions; and, whilst Sarah Nethway's executor is to have responsibility for the education and breeding of her children, her overseers are charged with advising them on it.[83] These overseers were therefore not only expected to guarantee that the testatrices' instructions were followed, but were also to represent her in her children's future lives.

In some cases, overseers were given even more power to exert the testatrix's proxy influence beyond her immediate family. Marie Eyton's overseers are tasked with:

> assisting [to] my said executrix in performing the same and that they will have care in guiding my executrix because she is yet young and keep my estate for her by me given in their hands and possession until she shalbe rateable by law to prove this my will or that she shalbe married and then to deliver (with an accompt) all my estate given her into her hands and custody And also I instruct my said overseers that they will be careful (as much as in them lyeth) that my executrix cast not her self away in her marriage.[84]

[81] TNA PROB11/164/702.
[82] TNA PROB11/151/355.
[83] TNA PROB11/279/46; PROB11/242/307; PROB11/186/344.
[84] TNA PROB11/195/527.

Marie's residual legatee is "my kinswoman Marie Hathway the daughter of Thomas and Margaret his wife" and her overseers are "my very good friends Mr William Cann merchant and Mr Mathias Jones merchant". Marie Hathway's parents were still alive; they receive no gifts from the testatrix and Marie Eyton dictates that:

> neither my said executrices father nor mother nor grandfather nor grandmother nor any other of her kindred by the fathers side shall have anything to do or meddle with any gift that I have herein given my said Executrix And if they or any of them shall take all or any part of my said gifts given unto her in their hands or custodies then and without case I hereby give full power and authority to my overseers hereafter named to sue for get and recover the same again into their hands and custody and to keep it for my said executrix and to put it forth for her best benefit they may until she be married…

Marie assumes the right not only to safeguard against any attempt on the part of Thomas and Margaret to steal from their daughter, but also to exert a posthumous and vicarious influence over the latter's choice of husband. In instructing her overseers to see that Marie Hathaway "cast not her self away in marriage", Marie Eyton seeks to ensure that her kinswoman's inheritance is not an inducement to an undesirable match. She does not trust Marie's parents to do so (or, perhaps, suspects that they might collude in a plot to obtain the money) and so usurps them, making her overseers her proxies to approve Marie's marriage. She uses her will to give William Cann and Mathias Jones rights over Marie Hathway and assumes that her instructions will be followed.

In most instances, a woman appointed friends and family to act as overseers, but the ways in which they were described not only nominated them, but also encoded a sense of duty on their behalf. Marie Birkin, for example, requests that her "loving friends … be overseers of this my will" and Elizabeth Hussey asks "William Gayer and John Hurcombe my loving friends to be my overseers".[85] The epithet 'loving' placed an obligation on her friends, as the testatrix assumed that they would undertake the appointed tasks because of their affection for her. Ann Price's overseers are "worthy", demonstrating their merit and concomitantly their suitability to fulfill the role.[86] Sarah Nethway's overseers are her "trusty friends", a description which implies an expectation of trustworthiness, as well as an acknowledgement of it.[87] Prudence Dorrington

[85] TNA PROB11/241/279; PROB11/244/230.
[86] TNA PROB11/200/613.
[87] TNA PROB11/186/344.

similarly appoints “Thomas Bishopp brewer Richard Higgins soapmaker and Robert Dittill button maker (friends trusted by me upon my marriage with the said John Dorrington)” to distribute her goods, chattels and estate.[88] She was a wife, writing with the permission of her husband, and her appointment of people whom he trusted and had introduced her to as trustworthy illustrates her indebtedness to him for allowing her to dispose of her first husband’s legacy.

These overseers could claim a personal relationship to the testatrix, but some women used their wills to exert influence on important men within their community by appointing them to act on their behalf, in the same way that Bess Bridges entails the mayor and alderman in *The Fair Maid of the West*. Jane Owfield, for instance, appoints “my cousin John Barker Alderman and Thomas Lloyd now one of the sheriffs of the city of Bristol my overseers”.[89] In choosing these men, she appeals not only to the kinship between her and Barker, but also to the men’s position and its attendant authority. Margery Hobbes goes further, requesting that the mayor of Bristol should be involved in settling any disagreements and in working with her overseers to give an opinion on the dissolution of any bequest which was disputed by a legatee.[90] This is not a personal relationship: the mayor is not named and is referred to as “the mayor of Bristol for the time being”. She makes recourse to the office, not the individual, assuming and exercising the right to instruct and require the mayor to act on her behalf following her death, suggesting that even ‘ordinary’ women could use public officers as endorsers and as a safeguard of their intentions.

The role of overseer was a supervisory one, designed to ensure that the executors of a woman’s will fulfilled their responsibilities. However, these examples demonstrate that it was not a statically defined role but one which was construed and used in a flexible way, to help and guide young and inexperienced executrices, to avoid disputation amongst children and to prevent interference from outside parties. Thus, testatrices were able to use the office as a way of obtaining trustworthy support, from friends, family or powerful allies. The ways in which the women labelled their overseers – as trustworthy or loving – not only described them, but also implied or invoked a duty and obligation on their part to act as the testatrix’s proxy.

[88] Bristol Archive FCW1645/1/43.
[89] TNA PROB11/165/372.
[90] TNA PROB11/149/89.

Guardians and Tutors

The ongoing care of minors was one of the main concerns and priorities of most women and the appearance of children in wills is frequently poignant. Often, a child was left to the care of a relative. When Jane Godwin died of the plague just a few days after her husband, she used her will to appoint her father to take care of her young son, entreating him to "breed him up as his own".[91] Agnis Stoninge chose her sister to look after her son and daughter "taking care of my children as shall be called for at her hands" and ensuring the settling of her estate on them as she laid out.[92] These testatrices relied on, and evoked, familial duty to ensure that their children were taken care of, but the fact that they felt it necessary to articulate these obligations suggests anxiety about the expectation of responsibility. Jane and Agnis did not feel assured that their family would undertake the care of their children as a matter of course and had to specify the role their father or sister was to play rather than maintaining a tacit faith that they would.

Like Jane and Agnis, other women used their wills as a way of formalising their expectations concerning the care, education and spiritual guidance of their children, even when the appointed guardians were family members. Jane Tink of Tintagel passes the care of her son to her brother whom she appoints "guardian for my sonne Frances", and leaves money for him to provide for Frances "until he comes to twenty one years of age", codifying her brother's guardianship and specifying the terms of it.[93] Ann Goddard appoints her brother-in-law and uncle guardians of her son

> to manage his estate as well of lands as goods until he shall accomplish the age of one and twenty years and in the mean time my loving uncle Francis Bownman to raise him and take the sole custody of his person that he may be virtuously educated and be brought up in the fear of God and good learning.[94]

As guardian, Francis Bowman is to look after the financial, spiritual and educational welfare of her son; her brother-in-law is presumably a failsafe mechanism, should her uncle fail in his duties, or die without having made

[91] TNA PROB11/194/401.
[92] TNA PROB11/200/53.
[93] TNA PROB11/245/320. Jane is recorded as being 'spinster' and certainly there is no mention of the child's father.
[94] TNA PROB11/255/321.

separate provision for his great-nephew and is thus positioned in the same way as an overseer of her intentions.[95] Ann's further instruction is that money be withheld from Frances should he "marry without the consent of his guardians". Thus, the men are given responsibility not only for looking after him, but also for exercising their judgement on her behalf. They are therefore cast *in loco parentis* and provided with the means of not only taking care of Frances, but also of sanctioning him should it be necessary. Like Ann, Sara Hawker of Yeovil appoints a committee of family to look after her children – her mother, her brother, and her cousin – to whom she commits "my whole trust and confidence for the duration and breeding of my son Thomas Hawker my said executor and Sarah Hawker and Francis Hawker my daughters" until the children come of age.[96] She spreads the responsibility around her family, rather than requiring one person to care for the three children, ensuring that there would be enough resources to provide for all of them.

As well as care for their children, women used their wills to request instruction and training for them, demonstrating an engagement with education which "ranged much more widely than has hitherto been reported, whether as pupils, as governesses, as schoolteachers, as founders", and suggesting that, in practice, women had greater autonomy in the arena of education than these prescriptive categories allow.[97] Whilst, as Swinburne states, "[t]he father maie appoint a tutor, by his testamente or last will", he allows that "[i]f the father die, no tutor being by him assigned, and the mother doo in her last will and testament appointe a tutor, the same will is to be prooued, and the asssignation of the tutor confirmed".[98] This permission allowed Margaret Mogg to appoint her brother to oversee the "bringing up of my daughter Grace in learning and the exercise of her needle and in all other godly practises as shall please God to give her grace".[99] Her brother is to ensure that Grace is schooled generally in godly

[95] Jane Edmonds of Truro does not appoint a specific guardian for her children but asks her executors to see her estate distributed to her children and wills that "if my said children cannot conveniently live together they maybe disposed in such places as they may live in the fear of god and walk in the ways of the gospel of Jesus Christ" (TNA PROB11/258/306).
[96] TNA PROB22/274/45.
[97] Kenneth Charlton, *Women, Religion and Education in Early Modern England* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), p.188.
[98] Swinburne, pp.96-7.
[99] TNA PROB11/163/18.

pursuits, but outside of this Margaret selects a specific type of instruction for her daughter and, in doing so, continues to participate in Grace's life after her death.

Joanne Murdock of Bristol appoints her cousin and executor to oversee the "breeding and bringing up" of her nephew "into whose charge I leve him hoping that he will see him well brought up and educated and when he is capable and able to be put to be an apprentice that he shalbe bound unto such a convenient trade or occupation as shalbe thought fit by my said executor".[100] Joanne uses her will to take responsibility for training her nephew, enabling him to become self-sufficient and capable of taking up a trade. Her instructions extend her influence beyond household matters in order to make sure that her nephew is able to participate in a useful occupation. Margaret's intention for her daughter's education is domestic, but Joane involves herself in matters which go beyond the household, placing her nephew in the external world of work.

Even where no explicit request for teaching was included, the appointment of guardians carried an implicit hope for professional advancement. Sarah Debanck of Dorchester engages her

> loving friends William Whittaker minister of Gods word William Hiccocks of London and Thomas Rodberd of London cheesemongers or anie two of them or in case of the death of any of them shall observe and conforme to the advice and discrecion of the survivour or survivors of them And in case either of my said sons shall not submit to be diverted to the said three persons or any two of them or the survivors and or survivor of them then I do give power to the said William Whittaker William Hiccocks and Thomas Rodberd or the survivors or survivor of them to take from such of my said sons as shall neglect or refuse to obey of follow the advice of the said three persons … such part of the legacies or legacy herein above bequeathed … not exceeding the sum of one hundred pounds.[101]

The nomination of these three men is designed to ensure both the spiritual and practical futures of her sons, and Sarah provides a sanctioning mechanism for making sure that the boys follow the advice that they are given. That William Hiccocks and Thomas Rodberd were both based in London would provide her sons with useful professional contacts in the capital, who would be in a position to place them in trade. Equally, in instructing her sons to defer to their guardians in respect of marriage, Sarah hopes that her proxies might arrange advantageous matches for them, thus further assuring their futures. The provisos that Sarah makes – that money might be witheld if her sons should marry contrary to the "advice and discrecion" of the men – also serve to cast her sons as obedient,

[100] TNA PROB11/156/94.
[101] TNA PROB11/268/457.

compliant, and godfearing. She would not be there to see them mature as such: the guardians were there to do so for her, with an added financial incentive to her sons lest they be tempted to forget her wishes.

Appointing guardians and tutors for children meant entailing relatives and friends to an uncertain future and many of these appointments came with financial recompense in terms of either gifts, or the use of money to provide for the child. In these cases, bequests were made to the children, with guardians allotted an allowance to see to their care. In her 1632 will, Margaret Surman of Bishop's Cleeve adjusts the amounts left by her husband to her two sons and the age at which they should receive them, and appoints her brother John Hobbes as executor of her will, requiring him to "keep my two sonnes at scoole and find them sufficient meate drinke apparrell and lodgings and to bynde them apprentices to some sufficient trade or occupation".[102] However, a nuncupative memorandum which was proved separately from the will itself, and which appears elsewhere in the records, suggests that she later changed her mind.[103] Instead of requiring John Hobbes to provide care for both of her sons, she now asks that "Richard Cowper als Allen whoe had marryed her sister should have one of her children and halfe of her goods to and for the use of the sayde childe". The sons are not named; they are more like commodities, given to her brother and brother-in-law. There is no way of knowing what happened to alter her intentions for her children's care, but it may be that she sought to expand their kinship circle in order to provide better security, in case something happened to one of the guardians. Anne Whittie of Sidmouth, Devon, likewise separates her children and entrusts each of them to a different guardian, desiring:

> the said Joseph Carstake undertake the keeping and bringing up of the aforesaid Amie Whittie my daughter and the said George Coade to undertake the keeping and bringing up of the aforesaid Johane Whittie my daughter. And my aforesaid executrix my mother to undertake the keeping and bringing up of the aforesaid John Whittie and the aforesaid Margaret Whittie my son and daughter And do desire them and each of them to train up my said children in instruction and information of the Lord and to set them to school.[104]

[102] TNA PROB11/159/98.
[103] TNA PROB11/161/242. There is sufficient correlation between the names of the people within the two documents to confirm that the memorandum is in fact a quasi-codicil to the original will. As with the two different wills apparently written by Alice Attwood (see 'Introduction'), both of these documents were proved and were accepted by the courts as Margaret's final wishes.
[104] TNA PROB11/207/314.

Alongside “information of the Lord” and schooling, Anne requests their guardians “each of them to train up my said children”, implying an expectation of instruction in a trade through which they might ensure their future. In this case, the desire to place her children with different people may have been in the hope of securing future employment for them. Placing two of her children with Carstake and Coade may have included an implicit request to see them apprenticed to them, whilst the younger two children may have been left with her mother either because they were still in need of day to day care, or perhaps because she practiced a trade which would be suitable for John and Margaret. In any case, Anne’s distribution of her children was presumably designed to avail them of the best possible opportunities and her will gave her the authority to make such requests.

This desire to see their children placed with people who might provide professional opportunities transformed women’s wills into *de facto* indentures. Their concern was not merely for the child’s immediate well-being, but also for their future as mothers sought to prepare their children for later life. In this respect, guardians functioned as proxies for the testatrix (who was, in effect, the proxy of her husband) and were left money to provide for both the children’s upkeep and their binding to a trade. As substitutes, guardians were also given power over the children through the instruction that they might withhold or withdraw provision should the children fail to adhere to the guardian’s (and by extension the testatrix’s) advice and guidance. Through these actions, the testatrix created a web of expectation and obligation, replacing herself with a group of people – executors, overseers, guardians and tutors – mandated to continue the care which she would not be there to provide.

Beneficiaries

Concerns regarding the future of their children were a major part of women’s wills, but the primary function of the document was the distribution of her property to a cast of beneficiaries. In her study of sixteenth-century testaments, Susan James identifies how women’s wills demonstrate a different conception of the family than men’s. Rather than “linear descent”, women saw their family as more “horizontal”, including “siblings and their offspring, godchildren, indigent female relations and assorted dependents”, demonstrating an “active interest in an expanded

definition of family".[105] This echoes Susan Amussen's observation that, whilst men made primary decisions about property, widows had different considerations, and their gifts were determined by perceptions of need.[106] These gendered principles are evident in the wills considered here, but there are nuanced differences in the way this horizontal expansion worked, and interacted with, seemingly masculine decisions about property and in the ways in which women demonstrated their concerns for different people within their families and social sphere. Wills therefore recorded not only the property which women had to leave, but also the way that they felt about the people to whom they left it.[107]

Parents, children, step-children, siblings, niblings, grandchildren, godchildren, cousins, aunts, uncles, friends, employers and employees populate the wills, but it is the taxonomy of these groups which demonstrates how the women saw them and how they wanted that to be recorded in relation to them.[108] Anne Pace of Newent, Gloucestershire, for example, clearly spells out the relationships between her legatees, herself and each other.[109] Thus, William Kerry and John Kerry are the sons of her "sister Johane Kerry lately deceased"; she gives money to "John Stephens and to Elizabeth Pitt wife of Joseph Pitt sister of the aforesaid John Stephens son and daughter of my sister Alice Stephens lately deceased" and to "Elizabeth Pitt daughter of the aforesaid Joseph Pitt and Elizabeth Pitt" and so forth. With each bequest, she spins a kinship web, demonstrating the relationship between the recipient and herself – and between one another – emphasising their ties and resurrecting her sisters Johane and Alice in the process.

Anne's descriptions outline the connections between her beneficiaries leaving unspoken the emotional ties that bound them, but some women used emotive descriptors to record how they felt about the people to whom they left bequests. Elizabeth Banester, for example, describes as "dear" her "loving sister

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[105] Susan James, *Women's Voices in Tudor wills, 1485-1603: Authority, Influence and Material Culture* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2015), pp.1-2.
[106] Amussen, p.91, 93.
[107] For a discussion of the ways in which wills reflect their feelings about the people to whom they left property, see Barbara J. Harris, *English Aristocratic Women, 1450-1500: Marriage and Family, Property and Careers* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002); J.S.W. Helt, 'Women, Memory and Will-Making in Elizabethan England' in *The Place of the Dead: Death and Remembrance in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe* ed. by Bruce Gordon and Peter Marshall (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp.188-206.
[108] Susan Tray of Gloucester leaves twenty shillings apiece to "my nephew Kempes two children Elizabeth and Marie" (TNA PROB11/217/5).
[109] TNA PROB11/243/380.

Mary Pate" whom she instructs to distribute her charity "in such proportions as my said sister shall think meet and according to such private directions as I have already given to my said sister". The two women have discussed her intentions and Elizabeth's use of the epithet "dear" expresses the faith that she has that her sister will comply with them. It is not restricted to this one sister, however, and she divides "the surplus whatsoever the sum shall be amongst my dear and loving sisters Frances Stratford, Mary Pate and Margaret Wells", with the double epithet of "dear" and "loving" illustrating the reciprocity of the affection between them. In using such descriptors, women demonstrated and drew on the relationships that they had with beneficiaries in life, publishing the same within their wills, presuming the endurance of the connections and seeking to ensure that through the will they would continue to be remembered. Their wills contain not only their families and immediate circles, but also their feelings about them, continuing their relationships beyond the death of the testatrix.

Nor did beneficiaries need to be physically close for women to include them. Elizabeth Slaughter leaves everything to her son, William Clarke, "if he be living and shall come to demand it within the term of seven years after my decease", making alternative provision for her property should he fail to appear.[110] Similarly, Agnes Morris of Bruton bequeaths a catalogue of articles to her son, John:

> my best featherbed one feather bolster one flock bolster two feather peales one pair of blankets one pair of canvas sheets being my best one blue rug and my bedstead in my new chamber my tableboard my livery board four joined stools in the same chamber my best brass pan one of my best kettles one spit.[111]

However, John is not in the country and she makes allowance that "if John my son do not come into England to claim and to receive the same that then they shall all remain unto John his son my grandchild", and in the case that the second John should die, to her second son and his heirs. In leaving her goods in this way, Agnes follows the traditional pattern of primogeniture, and the fact that John is absent does not mean that he is forgotten; she uses her will to express a perhaps unspoken hope that he might return, or to at least ensure that there would be something for him if he did.

[110] TNA PROB11/196/461.
[111] TNA PROB11/163/598.

Other absent beneficiaries include unborn children. Katherine Yerbury allocates money for the child her daughter Jane was expecting as long as she did not miscarry it.[112] Similarly, Agnes Archard records that "I give unto such issue as Joane the wife of my son Richard Archard goeth withal thirty shillings".[113] These babies are unborn, but their arrival is expected; Katherine Grilles' bequest to a merely possible grandson – "if it please God that my son William Grilles shall hereafter have a son and that if that son shall accomplish the age of one and twenty years that then my said son shall then give him …" – is more speculative.[114] Despite the conditional nature of the bequests, there was an expectation that there would be children, and the women's bequests signal a desire to be remembered by beneficiaries whom they had not known and who would not know them.[115] It is also possible that Honer Rockwell who leaves "to all my grandchildren in New England both sons and daughters Richard Rockwell William Rockwell and John Rockwell twelve pence apiece" had not met them.[116] The inclusion of "daughters" with the named boys suggests that she did not know about all the children, or that she was again making provision for as yet unborn additions to the family. Similarly, Lucretia Potte assigns the remainder of a debt to be collected by her son-in-law on behalf of "my said grandchildren Elizabeth and Anthony Hill who are now beyond the seas".[117] In addition, these children are to receive physical bequests – a double salter and a signet ring which had been her father's – thus establishing Lucretia as a conduit between her past and her family's future, physically linking together generations separated not only in time, but also in space and reflecting the symbolic rather than financial values of the material objects bequeathed: it was not about giving money, but about passing on referents of the family.

Servants were another group of people remembered in women's wills and again the ways in which these servants were described demonstrates how they were regarded by the women. Some women, such as Anne Burnoll, gave money to "every one of my servants living with me at the time of my death", an instruction which allowed them to make provision for all those who might be attending them

[112] Wiltshire, England, Wills and Probate, 1530-1858 (*Ancestry.co.uk* P22/1/27).
[113] Bristol Archive FCW1641/1.
[114] TNA PROB11/162/582.
[115] The use of wills as a means of enshrining memorialisation will be discussed in chapter three.
[116] TNA PROB11/176/74.
[117] TNA PROB11/184/305.

at the time of their death, without having to change their will as personnel changed.[118] However, many women named their servants, signifying the relationship between them and marking the esteem in which they were held. Marie Bragg, for example, leaves "unto my servant Margaret she attending me unto the time of my death five pounds", naming her and placing her bequest on a personal basis.[119] Sarah Browne's bequest to Hanna Dwyer, her "kinswoman and servant", prioritises her familial status over her occupational one.[120] Alongside generic bequests to servants in her employ, Gartrud Morgan appoints "forty pounds or five pounds yearly for his maintenance during his life" to "my old servant Henry Troe", along with "the bed which he now lodgeth in with all that belongeth unto it two pairs of rough sheets to change his bed withal".[121] The ongoing financial and material support of Troe suggests a closeness in their relationship, or a clear sense of responsibility, but the inclusion of "rough sheets" maintains the distance between mistress and servant. Whereas general bequests to servants can be seen as rewards for service rendered and as a means of ensuring their ongoing security after the death of their mistress, they were also an indication of a more substantial, enduring and personal relationship between the testatrix and the servant, as will be seen in the discussion of Lucy Reynell and Anne Trosse in chapter four.

Ann Doddington's will not only catalogues her property, but also explores her relationships with her legatees and seeks to maintain the links between her and them beyond her death.[122] Her bequests include jewellery and money to her brother and sister, whom she describes as her "best beloved" Arthur and Elizabeth, the use of 'beloved', as opposed to 'loving', demonstrating her feelings towards them without implying any obligation on their part. However, it is the family of Florence, Lady Stalling of Kenn, Somerset, to whom Ann was servant, who receive the remainder of her property.[123] As her first bequest, she appoints twenty pounds to Lady Stalling's daughter, Elizabeth Poulett, whom Ann describes as "the right honourable the Lady Elizabeth wife to the right honourable

[118] TNA PROB11/241/370.
[119] TNA PROB11/209/173.
[120] Gloucestershire, England, Wills and Inventories, 1541-1859 *Ancestry.co.uk* 22424.
[121] TNA PROB11/273/444.
[122] TNA PROB11/198/256.
[123] Florence, Lady Stalling was married first to Sir Christopher Kenn, and then to Nicholas Stalling. She and Kenn had no sons, and so the line died out with their daughters. I am indebted to John Ball, churchwarden of St. John the Evangelist, Kenn, for his help with this.

the Lord John Poulett baron of Hinton Saint George the daughter of my good Lady Stallendge and my most honourable friend and kinswoman".[124] By reciting Elizabeth's title and her credentials as the wife and daughter of a lord, Ann's claim for her as "honourable friend and kinswoman" situates the two of them within the same circle. She joins together textually the Stalling family, the Pouletts and herself, through kinship and marriage, and the repetition of "honourable" also serves to bind the families through a shared quality. It is layered, so that by the end, Elizabeth is thrice "honourable" – in her own right, through her husband and through the friendship and kinship of Ann Doddington and, by association, Ann is also "honourable". This is continued in her description of Elizabeth's daughters – Susanna, Helena and Elizabeth – and sons – Sir John and Amias – individually as the children of "the right honourable Lord John Poulett Barron of Hinton Saint George", the repetition of which rehearses the family's eminence.

Having made provision for the Pouletts, Ann then turns to the family of Margaret Rowles, another daughter of Florence Stalling.[125] Again, she describes each of Margaret's girls as "daughter of Dennis Rowle esquire", confirming their pedigree. These gifts of jewellery are her own pieces, given to the girls in rank order. Thus, the eldest daughter, Elizabeth, receives "my best pearl bracelet"; their second daughter "twenty gold buttons enamelled and set with pearls"; the third (also her goddaughter and named for her) "my second gold border which is enamelled and set with pearls", and the youngest "my lesser sort of gold buttons

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[124] Lord John Paulett was a royalist army officer and Member of Parliament in 1610 and 1614. He was created first Baron Paulett in 1627 and was knighted following his command of the king's ship *Constant Reformation* in 1635. He withdrew from the Lords in 1642 and signed the York manifesto, joining forces with the marques of Hertford at Wells. In 1643 he was impeached for treason, captured in Shropshire by the earl of Essex, escaped and was involved in the siege of Lyme Regis with Prince Maurice. Following the war, he was treated well and was allowed to retire to Hinton. He died in 1649 and the chapel in the parish church is dedicated to his memory. (Thomas G. Barnes, "Poulett, John, first Baron Poulett (1586–1649)" in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* ed. by H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) Online ed. Ed. David Cannadine. May 2008 [Accessed 3 November 2017] <http://0-www.oxforddnb.com.lib.exeter.ac.uk/view/article/22632>).

[125] According to *The Visitations of the County of Devon*, John Paulett had eight children, including three unnamed daughters. Elizabeth is named in the records and by Ann. Susan is named by Ann, along with Helena. They are described by Ann as the younger daughters. It may be that the missing daughters had died by the time that Ann made her will. (Lt.Col. J.L. Vivian, 'Pedigree of Rolle' *The Visitations of the County of Devon: Comprising the Heralds' Visitations of 1531, 1564 & 1620* (Exeter: 1895), pp.652-656 (p.653). http://www.tudorplace.com.ar/PAULET.htm#William%20PAULET%20%281%C2%B0%20M.%20Winchester%29 [Accessed 4 November 2017]; https://www.revolvy.com/main/index.php?s=John%20Poulett,%201st%20Baron%20Poulett) [Accessed 4 November 2017]. Margaret married Denys Rolle of Stevenston and Bicton in Devon in 1636 (Ibid.).

that are enamelled and set with pearls which are in number seventeen". These are personal bequests. They have an intrinsic value, but the detailed description of them demonstrates the way Ann feels about them and, in meticulously describing the pieces, she rehearses their worth to her and the concomitant value she places on their recipients.

These examples illustrate the ways in which women used their wills to not only nominate beneficiaries, but also to record their relationships to them. Whereas, in some fictive representations of wills and will-writing, testatrices cast emblem figures as their legatees, whether to align themselves with certain groups as Penthea does, to emphasise their disenfranchisement as Whitney's speaker does, or to satirise the recipients as *Jyl* does, real testatrices left real property to real people.[126] Women left their posessions to a wider range of people than men, often responding to perceived need or affection rather than being constrained by customary expectations. In recording these connections, the testatrix situated herself within a particular social sphere and her will became a textual monument to the relationships she had in life, ensuring that they would endure beyond her death. However, it was not only the use of epithets such as "dear" or "loving" which established how a testatrix felt about a beneficiary; the detailed descriptions of personal items left to individuals can also be read as encoding the affection in which she held the beneficiary. These things were not necessarily of significant financial value, but the worth in which they were held reflected how the testatrix felt about the person to whom they were given.

The poor

In addition to family and friends, many women made bequests to the poor. Whilst Protestant doctrine eschewed deathbed charity as an instrument for the achievement of salvation, women still used their wills as a way of giving money and alms, sometimes to named individuals and sometimes to a collective category of 'the poor'. However, the ways in which these people were described and provided for actually indicate that women had their own criteria for deciding

[126] John Ford, *'Tis Pity She's a Whore and other plays* ed. by Marion Lomax (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995); Danielle Clarke (ed.), *Isabella Whitney, Mary Sidney and Amelia Lanyer: Renaissance Women Poets* (London: Penguin, 2000), pp.19-28; Robert Copland, *Jyl of Braintfords Testament* (London: William Copland, c. 1567).

who was deserving of their charity and that they expected their proxies to know and share these standards and be willing to act upon them.

Whilst the wills in this study predate the 1697 statute which formalised the categories of 'deserving' and 'undeserving' poor, local attempts to distinguish between the two had appeared over the course of the sixteenth- and seventeenth-centuries.[127] However, as Steve Hindle argues, the badges issued to distinguish local, acknowledged poor from an outside, predatory one evolved from being "tokens of approval to become symbols of humiliation".[128] As a result, the "uneasy conjunction of public and private charity" was brought to the fore, forcing into general awareness those who had previously perhaps been covert recipients, inculcating them with a sense of shame: the badge which had served as a mark of approval – a confirmation of a person's status as deserving – became a brand which was a stigma of their condition.[129] This survey of wills from between 1625 and 1660 reveals that testatrices gave to a range of people in need and their charity was both private and public and whilst some gave to sanctified and authorised groups of poor people, others used their wills to construct their own definition of a 'deserving poor'.

When a testatrix left money to the poor of the parish she accepted a mandated definition of poverty, one which had been established by the overseers of the poor or the local vestry and in some cases, signalled her acceptance of the category by employing these officials to manage the distribution of her charity. This is the case when Barbara Walker of Bristol leaves money to all the parishes in the city to be

> paid into the hands of the churchwardens of the said several parishes as for the time being And be by them and the several ministers of every of the said several parishes paid and distributed amongst the said poor people where most need and necessity shalbe.[130]

Similarly, Theophila Dodimead's bequest "to the poor of the parish of St Stephens within the said city of Bristol ten shillings in money to be paid unto the churchwardens of the same parish (for the time being) to be distributed amongst them where shalbe most needed at their discretion" relies on the sanctioned

[127] For a discussion of this, see Steven Hindle 'Dependency, Shame and Belonging: Badging the Deserving Poor, c.1550-1750' *The Journal of the Social History Society* 1:1 (2004) 6-35.
[128] Hindle, p.8.
[129] Hindle, p.8.
[130] TNA PROB11/173/630.

categorisation of the vestry, as do those of Johan Willis of Tewkesbury and Joan Moore of Tavistock, whose gifts are to be supervised by the "baylif or churchwardens" and "eight sidemen" respectively.[131] As well as these clerical and ecclesiastical officers, some women engaged the mayor of the town to manage their charity. Mary Goslett of Gloucester calls for three pounds to "be disposed of by the right honourable the mayor and justices of the said city" and Christian Hall of Poole trusts her charity to "the discretion of the mayor and overseers of the poor of the town".[132] These women were not only making charitable gifts, they were also enlisting these men into their service, requiring them to monitor their individual charity, closing the gap between public and private giving. They accepted official definitions of poverty and channelled their aid into authorised institutions overseen by men and, in doing so, demonstrated their presumption to direct others in their stead.

Using these approved groups of poor provided a useful conduit for women to spread their beneficence across a number of parishes. Edith Charleton, for example, gives "to each of those several parishes within the city of Bristol (vizt) Saint Michael Saint Phillipp St Augustin Saint Peter Saint Werburg Saint Thomas Redcliff Saint James Saint Stephens and Temple the sum of twenty shillings".[133] Edith describes herself as being "of the city of Bristol singlewoman", remaining un-associated with a specific parish, but aligning herself with several through her charitable bequests to their poor. Elizabeth Costen of Lanteglos by Fowey in Cornwall leaves "to the poor of Lanteglos aforesaid twenty shillings. To the poor of Fowey ten shillings and to the poor of the parishe of St Bullocks [sic] ten shillings", privileging the poor of her own parish over those of the nearby ones and possibly making a comment on her perception of the relative need of the poor in those three parishes, or on her relationship to them.[134]

Through these bequests, testatrices created an homogenous category – 'poor people' – against which the woman herself stood. In leaving them money, they both associated themselves with, and distanced themselves from these people, othering them. Their beneficiaries existed within the same parish, town or city as them, or in neighbourhoods with which they were familiar, but their need set them outside of the testatrices' circle. When Joyce Horwood of Hawkesbury

[131] Bristol Archive FCW/1629/1/42; TNA PROB11/190/358; PROB11/154/374.
[132] TNA PROB11/217/714; PROB11/189/428.
[133] TNA PROB11/206/327.
[134] TNA PROB11/228/5.

in Gloucestershire, for example, allots three shillings and four pence to the poor of the same parish, she leaves it to her executors to select them, despite the fact that it was a small village and Joyce would have known the poor people alongside whom she lived.[135] The frequently additional instruction that such gifts be given "at the discretion of my executor" (or overseer, or family), finessed the categorisation, appointing a proxy to determine their identity.[136] Thus, the category of 'deserving poor' was one which was created not by the local officials, but by the testatrix's agents, and the right to do so was assumed through the writing of the will.

Sometimes, however, the 'poor' were people known to and recognised by the benefactrix, such as Jone Raymond for whom Ann Doddington makes provision in her will and "Alice Pork a lame maid" to whom Maud Man of Gloucester leaves "a smocke petticoat".[137] These women might be "poor" or "lame", but they are not anonymous and their relationships to Ann and Maud are recognised. Other deserving cases were singled out for charity despite being in receipt of other forms of support. Catherine Westlake of Barnstaple makes provision "unto Thomas Beacham my alms boy ten shillings And unto Peter Lake sometimes my almes boy ten shillings … And unto the old Thomasine Courtis now dwelling in the almsehouse ten shillings".[138] Relationships are implied in these bequests by the claims made for "my" alms boy and Catherine's observation that Thomasin is "*now* living in the almshouse" [my emphasis] implies that this had not always been the case. Giving money to the three of them fulfils an ongoing or historic commitment to them, but also acknowledges Catherine's awareness of the shortcomings of institutionalised charity. Her gifts supplement this provision but do so in a targeted and personal way. Her will thus distinguishes between public and private, collective and individual charity.

Bequests to the occupants of almshouses were not normally left to named individuals but to the general populace. As an institution, the almshouse was

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[135] Gloucester, England, Wills and Inventories, 1541-1858. *Ancestry.co.uk* 223823. In 1650, 140 families were recorded as living in Hawkesbury. (E. La Trobe-Bateman *Avon Extensive Urban Survey Archaeological Assessment Report: Hawkesbury Upton* <https://www.southglos.gov.uk/documents/pte070178.pdf> [Accessed 19th November 2019].
[136] There are many examples of this instruction, including Anne Warren TNA PROB11/183/519.
[137] TNA PROB11/198/256; Gloucester, England, Wills and Inventories, 1541-1858. *Ancestry.co.uk* 221477
[138] TNA PROB11/185/556.

> a fixed place, locating the occupants in geographical and social space; providing a stake in the local community, or excluding the occupants on the margins; giving individuals and families a stage on which to play the role of householder, parent, or dependant; and confirming the occupants' status, or lack of it, within the local hierarchy. Providing housing for the poor is therefore not just about physical shelter, but is freighted with meaning.[139]

This marginalisation of residents was reflected in bequests made by testatrices, who unlike Catherine Westlake, treated them as homogenous groups, such as Alice Pirrie of Street, Somerset who donates to the residents of both the "uppermost" and "lowermost" almshouses in Glastonbury.[140] Em Symons similarly gives "unto the poor people in the almshouse in the marshe of Bristol the full sum of twenty shillings of good and lawful money of England to be distributed amongst them immediately after my decease" and Thomasine Heash of Wells leaves gendered bequests "to every man of the thirty poor alms people in Wells three pence a piece and to any women of the said thirty four pence a piece".[141] These gifts demonstrate the testatrices' involvement with institutions of charity; they are public donations, given to publicly established places for the succour of the poor. The testatrices put their faith in these institutes and perhaps chose them because of the opportunity that such establishments offered for making their charity public, to a civic audience.

In order for women to make these donations, almshouses had to have been established, and evidence from wills suggests that women assumed the right to enter into public provision of charity by building and appointing them. As will be seen in chapter four, Lucy Reynell of Newton Abbott erected a terrace of almshouses for the widows of ministers during her own widowhood, and, like her, Elizabeth Paige of Barnstaple uses her will to record her ongoing engagement with the institution.[142] Elizabeth had already built one almshouse, and, in her will, bestows money for the construction and furnishing of a second:

> Item I give to the building and erecting of those almshouses (now in decay) commonly known and being called the Almes Lanes and lay next and adjoining unto that almshouse built and erected by my self or at my proper cost and charges formerly the sum of one hundred pounds to be bestowed therein at the discretion of my executor hereafter named

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[139] Angela Nichols, *Almshouses in Early Modern England: Charitable Housing in the Mixed Economy of Welfare, 1550-1725* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, Boydell Press, 2017), p. 4. As John Broad has observed, there was a rise in the desire of people across the seventeenth- and eighteenth-centuries to assert the right of the poor to a home of their own (John Broad, 'Housing' The Parish *Poor House in the Long Eighteenth Century, Accommodating Poverty*, ed. by. Joanne McEwan and Pamela Sharpe, (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp.246-62).

[140] TNA PROB11/155/345.

[141] TNA PROB11/242/121; PROB11/247/709.

[142] TNA PROB11/221/737.

> Item I give unto the mayor and aldermen for the time being and unto their succesors the sum of fifty pounds to be lent forth for the benefit of those poor people which shall be hereafter placed into those alms houses when built and toward the repairing of that almshouse already built as well as those other almshouses to be built and the remaining profit of the said fifty pounds to be yearly distributed equally unto the said poor the whole week before Christide I do make it my request unto the said mayor and aldermen that they and their successors from time to time do take good security for the fifty pounds and in some such person or persons as shall borrow the same to bring it in at the end of every year or to know their bond by them selves and two sufficient sureties And I do further desire and ordain that during the whole life time of my executor here after named he may have the placing of such poor into those almshouses when built as he shall commend to be most fit and to remove them to his pleasure (in case of misdemeanour) Item my will is that my executor hereafter named shall furnish each of those almshouses when finished and built with a tableboard cupboards flock bedstead rug canvas stool daybed.[143]

She appoints the mayor and aldermen to act on her behalf, to lend out her money and thereby casts her project as a community undertaking, an association which is also indicated by the involvement of Thomas Horwood, a previous mayor of the town, in the enterprise. Her executor is given responsibility for overseeing the building of the almshouse, spending the money at his discretion and she appoints him to make decisions about who should live there and who should be ejected "at his pleasure (in case of misdemeanour)". He is therefore charged with determining, on her behalf, who was worthy of her charity, constituting him as her proxy. Her charity is contingent: almshouses excluded the indigent poor and those who managed to live at home and, in bestowing the dwellings, Elizabeth determines which particular group of poor is worthy of her support. By specifying the furnishing of the almshouses, Elizabeth creates a home for her beneficiaries, but it is one which reflects what she thinks should be in it. As such, she articulates a desire to see the inhabitants conform to the domestic standards and behaviours which she feels are suitable for them, and this is reinforced by her provision for the removal of anyone who misbehaves. She therefore not only casts her poor, but also constrains them within her own perception of their entitlement. As a result, her charity is public, but highly selective and aimed at being restorative, at placing the recipients into situations which she feels are appropriate for them.

Other civic institutions were also the beneficiaries of women's charity. In Exeter, Elizabeth Trosse allots "unto the poor prisoners in the common gaole of

[143] TNA PROB11/266/167. Elizabeth Paige was the widow of Gilbert Paige, previously mayor of Barnstaple. Additional funding for the almshouses was provided by Thomas Horwood who had also been mayor of the town. To the four that Elizabeth and Horwood provided, the latter's widow added eight more, for the upkeep of which she leaves money in her will (*Barnstaple Almshouses* <http://www.barnstaplealmshouses.co.uk/history/> [Accessed 6 March 2019]; TNA PROB11/352/495).

the said citie of Exon two shillings five pence Item I give and bequeath to the poore prisoners in the common gaole of the countie of Devon the some of five shillings", a concern which she shared with her husband who had likewise left money for the inmates of the two institutions.[144] Joane Gould of Dorchester makes provision for the poor children of the town:

> Whereas I have heretofore given and delivered unto certain townsmen in Dorchester the sum of one hundred marks towards the erecting and procuring of an hospital for the poor of the town my further will and meaning is and I do give and bequeath unto the Governors of the poor children of the hospital of the Mayor bayliffe aldermen and burgesses of the borough of Dorchester aforesaid which shall happen to be to the only sole benefits and behoof of the same hospital and poor children the sum of thirty three pounds six shillings and eight pence more to make the said one hundred allready delivered one hundred pounds to be delivered unto the said governors within two years after my decease and within one year after that to be by the governor of the same hospital bestowed and employed to and about the same hospital and poor children as the said governors shall think meet.[145]

These gifts to institutions demonstrate the women's involvement in civic life and concerns which transcend their immediate family and friends. For all of these women, writing a will gave the authority to make such bequests, but it also provided them with a semi-public arena in which to record their charity – both in life and at their death – securing a form of memorialisation as a result.

Bequests to poor widows, such as those made by Julyan Doidge who gives "unto every poor widow woman of the town of Tavistock aforesaid six pence apiece", or Marie Babidge who gifts "to ten poor widows of Cullompton to each of them two shillings sterling and to be given to such only as shall seem fit in the discretion of my executor and overseers", reflect their own situation as widows and their desire to ameliorate the lives of women with whom they had at least their widowhood in common.[146] However, such bequests constructed the sub-category of deserving-poor-widow, with the concomitant value judgements that this entailed.[147] The chosen women would presumably have been those who shared the values and qualities of the testatrix herself, as adjudged by her proxy, and who therefore offered a mirror of the woman's quality, blurred only by the

[144] TNA PROB11/163/567; PROB11/132/415.
[145] TNA PROB11/158/612.
[146] TNA PROB11/244/270; PROB11/161/593.
[147] For a discussion of the position of widows, see, for example, Kathleen M. Llewellyn, 'Words to the Wise: Reappropriating the Widow in Early Modern Didactic Literature' *Parergon* Volume 21, Number 1 (2004) 39-63; Sandra Cavallo, and Lynda Warner, *Widowhood in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (New York: Pearson Education Ltd., 1999); Jennifer Panek, *Widows and Suitors in Early Modern English Comedy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

poor widows' lack of financial stability. Neither was it only widows who reflected their status in their charitable bequests; Sapience Edney, a single-woman, leaves "unto five poor maids of the parish of Saint John the Baptist within the Devizes aforesaid five shillings to be equally divided among them And to five poor maids of the parish of the Blessed Virgin Mary within the Devizes aforesaid five shillings to be equally divided among them".[148] She was perhaps unlikely to find girls who shared her name to be recipients of her largess but, like Heywood's Bess Bridges, she identifies herself with these unmarried women through her bequests to them.[149]

In some cases, gifts given to unnamed people hinted at the testatrix's past, reflecting the life she was now leaving. In Tavistock, for example, several women made bequests to specific groups within the town. The charity of Joan Smith extends to "ten poor weavers of Tavistock" to whom she appoints "two shillings apiece" at the discretion of her executor and Katherine Grilles, also of Tavistock, singles out "forty poor artefactors and tradesmen of the town".[150] These gifts suggest that Joan and Katherine had been involved in some way in related activities, and also that there was a local convention of leaving money to such groups.[151] Julian Stibbins' gift to "the company of soapmakers within the said city of Bristol" of "forty shillings in money to drink together on the day of my funeral" implies an association with the same, as does Barbara Walkers' bequest of the same amount to "the fraternity of tailors within the said city".[152] If the women had been involved in these trades, it is possible that they knew the people who would be recipients of their gifts, but, once again, they remain categorised, rather than named, potentially to avoid stigmatising individuals by identifying them or as a way of creating or acknowledging a solidarity amongst the groups which would be all the more salient if the testatrix had participated in the occupation.

These gifts served to populate women's wills with not only their family, friends and kin, but also with other groups within society. Through their inclusion, such people existed alongside the testatrix, peripherally present, peeking in at the margins of her life and making their presence known. However, they were cast – and excluded – from the testatrix's point of view. Where women left money

[148] TNA PROB11/200/592.
[149] Thomas Heywood *The Fair Maid of the West* (Oxford: Benediction Classics, 2012).
[150] TNA PROB11/161/426; PROB11/162/582.
[151] Both wills were proved in 1632. It is therefore not inconceivable that the women know one another and moved in the same circles.
[152] TNA PROB11/220/702; PROB11/173/630.

to be distributed by the local authorities, they confirmed their acceptance of recipients as the deserving poor, but not all women adhered to such externally imposed descriptions; by appointing specific people or groups of people, or instructing her agent to do so, a testatrix applied the epithet according to her own definition of 'deserving'. These people were acknowledged, but often remained nameless, determined by their position which could be defined either in opposition to that of the testatrix, or in solidarity with her. And, in order to be eligible for their beneficence, there was a requirement that the poor were not only in financial need, but worthy of relief and able to demonstrate the same to the testatrix's proxy.

The self

The scribes, preachers, executors, overseers and beneficiaries who appeared in women's wills were only the supporting cast; the main character in a will was the testatrix herself. She was the "I" whose voice dominated the document, the "I" whose voice echoed, like that of Webster's Duchess, from beyond the grave.[153] However, this 'I' was not neutral and I argue that, in their wills, women selected the aspects of their lives which they wanted recorded and that the documents, alongside the legal concerns with which they were ostensibly involved, also gave testatrices a quasi-public arena in which to portray themselves.

Stephen Greenblatt, in *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* asserts that, in the sixteenth-century "there appears to be an increased self-consciousness about the fashioning of human identity as a manipulable, artful process".[154] Identity, he claims, is determined by the creation of "a distinctive personality, a characteristic address to the world, a consistent mode of perceiving and behaving".[155] This sense of 'I', however, depended upon the contexts in which it was fashioned – the court, the church, the family – and relied as much on what was left out of the self-presentation as what was included.[156] As a result, this contextual contingence means that the sixteenth-century selves which Greenblatt describes were disposed to "flux and change, subject to radical instability, constituted in

[153] John Webster, *The Duchess of Malfi* ed. by Monica Kendall (Harlow: Pearson Education, 2004), v.3.
[154] Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), p.2.
[155] Greenblatt, p.2.
[156] Greenblatt, p.139.

contradictions and oppositions".[157] Greenblatt's discussion is restricted to men in the sixteenth-century who were best known as writers. This implies that the opportunity to fashion a self was not open to women or to men who were not in a position to write. By privileging 'literature' as evidence of this self-fashioning, Greenblatt actually restricts the flux that he discusses, limiting the possibilities available to both non-literary men and women who were as likely as their fathers, husbands, brothers and sons to be engaged in the context within which they lived. Women's lives were just as likely to be in "flux and change" as they progressed from daughter to wife, to mother, to widow, and yet they form no part of Greenblatt's consideration. Thus, rather than relying on Greenblatt's rather limited definition of 'literature', I suggest that the range of texts considered as self-fashioning should be expanded to include wills which offered 'ordinary' people – including women – an opportunity to present a selective image of themselves.

A close analysis of the language of women's wills demonstrates the extent to which they used the document as a vehicle for self-fashioning. The opening sentence of the vast majority of wills presents 'I' as its first subject. "In the name of God Amen I Margaret Burges" not only makes Margaret the subject of the sentence, it establishes her as the subject of the whole document and does so with the explicit permission of God.[158] This 'I' is the most frequently occurring word in the will, but it is not neutral.[159] It is selected and presented by the testatrix, and the ideas with which she surrounds the word, and those which she chooses to exclude, serve to indicate the 'I' which she seeks to represent in her will. It is also this 'I' against which she casts everyone else; 'my' executors, overseers, kin and friends were contingent upon the 'I'. As such, Lucinda Becker asserts, through the use of the pronoun "in a series of mandated bequests that state 'I give and bequeath', the reader can have little doubt that they are hearing an individual voice".[160] That individual voice was one which the woman actively created, selecting and moulding it in her own image.

[157] Greenblatt, p.1202.
[158] Dorset Archive, Cc/W/251.
[159] See figure 11 which illustrates the relative frequency of words in Margaret Burges (Dorset Archive, Cc/W/251).
[160] Lucinda Becker, *Death and the Early Modern Englishwoman* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), p.152.

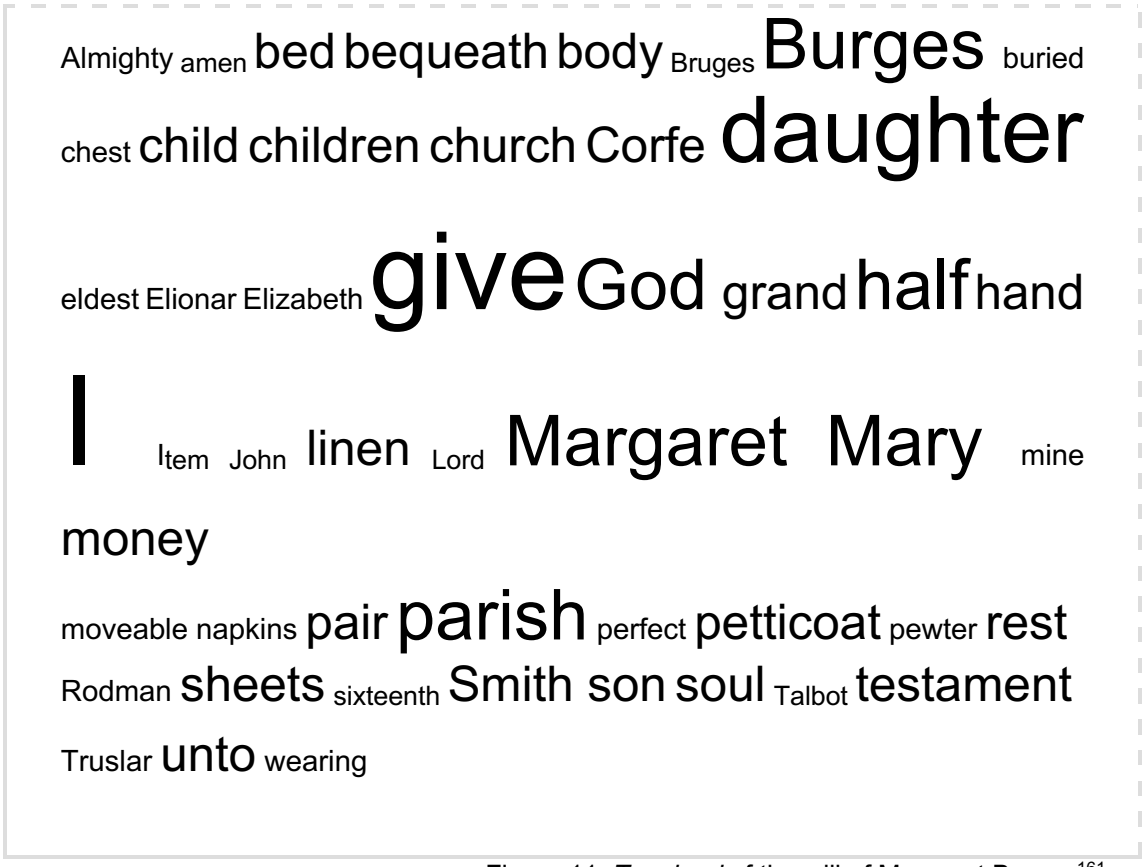

Figure 11. *Tagcloud* of the will of Margaret Burges[161]

In a few cases, the 'I' comes with an attendant overt reference to social class and standing, with some women casting themselves as 'gentlewoman'. Jane Whittle defines the term 'gentleman' as denoting status, but also the ability to live off the profits of rents; women appear to have used the analogous title 'gentlewoman' in the sense of being of good birth or breeding, or being married to a gentleman.[162] The designator is employed by Elizabeth Watts of Cucklington, Somerset, who is described as 'gent'; by Mary Duke of West Wellow, Wiltshire,

[161] Dorset Archive, Cc/W/251; created in TagCrowd (https://tagcrowd.com/).
[162] Jane Whittle, 'Enterprising widows and active wives: women's unpaid work in the household economy of early modern England' *The History of the Family*, 19:3 (2014) 283-399 (p.150); "gentlewoman, n." *OED Online* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, January 2018) www.oed.com/view/Entry/77688 [Accessed 1 February 2018]. Margaret Cavendish defends herself by claiming the status of gentleman for her father and demonstrating why he had not been elevated: "My father was a gentleman, which title is grounded and given by merit, not by princes; and it is the act of time, not favour: and though my father was not a peer of the realm, yet there were few peers who had much greater estates, or lived more noble therewith. Yet at that time great titles were to be sold, and not at so high rates, but that his estate might have easily purchased, and was pressed for to take; but my father did not esteem titles, unless they were gained by heroic actions, and the kingdom being in a happy peace with all other nations, and in itself being governed by a wise king, King James, there was no employments for heroic spirit" (Margaret Cavendish, The life of William Cavendish, duke of Newcastle, to which is added The true relation of my birth, breeding and life ed. by C.H. Firth (London: John C. Nimmo, 1886), p.275.

who is “gent and widow” and Jane Tavenor who is a “gentlewoman and widdow.[163] Alice Ricards of Ludgershall, Wiltshire, Bridget Sidenham of Minehead, Somerset and Alice Hodges of Barton Saint David, Somerset are likewise “gentlewoman”.[164] Mary Carent of Henstridge, Somerset, identifies herself as “gentlewoman of Toomer House, Henstridge, Somerset”.[165] These women make no reference to how they claim the status; Fortune Southbye, on the other hand, does so through her husband who was still alive.[166] She describes him as “gent” and leaves him “the goods and household stuff that are in the house”. Penelope Lovett of Devon similarly asserts her status through reference to a man, in this case her father, the right worshipful Sir Robert Lovett, knight.[167] Similarly, Elizabeth Masters of Tavistock is a gentlewoman and her status as such is suggested by the people she names within her will.[168] For example, she gives “to my aunt Joan Lady St John fifty pounds”; to “Lady Elizabeth daughter to the right honourable the earl of Bath my little sprig of gold acorns … I give to Lady Dorothy a little gold ring”. These bequests are not enormous, but in giving them to titled people, Elizabeth confirms the social status which she claims in her qualification. Edmund Spenser might have designed *The Faery Queene* as an exploration of how to “fashion a gentleman or noble person in virtuous and gentle discipline”, but these women used their wills as a way of fashioning themselves as gentlewomen through their associations with people of position and standing.[169]

For some women, then, the will offered the opportunity to fashion themselves a ‘gentlewoman’, either through the way in which they describe themselves, or through their associations with their beneficiaries, and this is epitomised in the will of the Honourable Lady Anne, Viscountess Dorchester.[170] Anne’s will runs to several pages, and includes a significant codicil. Like Elizabeth

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[163] TNA PROB11/150/331; PROB11/190/64. Cornwall Record Office AP/T/434.
[164] TNA PROB11/173/23; PROB11/208/262; PROB11/241/591.
[165] TNA PROB11/195/341.
[166] TNA PROB11/259/515.
[167] TNA PROB11/228/31.
[168] TNA PROB11/161/145.
[169] Edmund Spenser ‘‘A Letter of the Authors’ The Faery Queen’ T*he Norton Anthology of English Literature: The Sixteenth Century/ The Early Seventeenth Century* Vol. 8 ed. by Stephen Greenblatt, George Logan, Katarine Eisaman Maus and Barbara K. Lewalski (New York and London: W.W. Norton, 2012), pp.777-780 (p.777).
[170] TNA PROB11/179/89. Her status appears to be confirmed in the way in which her will is recorded in the register, with her title given in ornate Latin in the margin, as a mark of her importance, albeit one which was given to her by someone else. The will which follows it, copied in the same hand, receives no such florid announcement.

Masters, she records the titles of her beneficiaries: her mother is “the Lady Anne”, her daughter-in-law “the lady viscount”, her daughter “the Lady Vicountess”. The value of her bequests reflects her standing, but the way that she describes them emphasises how she sees her own status. Her “two suits of damask” from the linen in her house in Westminster “hath my late Lord of Dorchesters Armes in it”, linking her to her husband and his position. Indeed, these particular items warrant several mentions, as exceptions within parcels of property left, each time with the same reference to their provenance. The elevated status of Anne’s beneficiaries, and the repeated reminders of her husband’s position serve to underscore not only the intrinsic value of the position that this rendered her, but also the extrinsic value. She was a Viscountess and this title and her status were major factors in her perception of herself and how she wanted to be seen and remembered.

It was not just gentlewomen who sought to construct an ‘I’ which was contingent on their relationship to other people. The majority of testatrices are described as ‘widow’, a designation which immediately situates them in relation to their deceased husband: Mary Winstone of Wheatenhurst, Gloucestershire, declares that she is the “late wife of Gyles Winstone”; Isabelle Barrett of Minsterworth is “late wife of William Barrett”; Anne Colston is “the late wife of Rowland Colston”; Alice Rashly is “widow late wife of Nicholas Rashly”.[171] By mentioning their husbands’ names, they re-establish the link between them which had been severed with his death. The placement of ‘wife’ after ‘widow’ inverts their current position; they have gone from wife to widow, but now, in invoking their dead husband, they go from widow to wife, albeit ‘late’. In death, their status as wife is reaffirmed, and the ‘I’ tacitly reconstituted as a ‘we’. As a result, the widowed woman and the married woman co-exist within the will, recalling the past to the present, something which will be discussed further in chapter three.

Unmarried women did not have recourse to a husband’s status and associations as part of their self-fashioning. They were identified as ‘spinster’ or ‘single woman’, but sometimes aligned themselves with their father or mother in order to position themselves within their birth family to the same ends. Thus Joan(ne) Eaton, single woman, is the “daughter of Thomas Eaton of Clifton in the county of Gloucs Yeoman deceased”; Damaras Moggs is the “spinster daughter of Peter Moggs late of the city of Bristol gardener deceased and Jane Tovie is

[171] TNA PROB11/208/249; PROB11/202/604; PROB11/265/282; FCW1634/4/30.

the “daughter of Richard Tovie formerly of the city of Bristol (soap boiler)”.[172] These men were dead; the position derived from their occupation that their daughters claim for them was no longer applicable, but they see it as part of their identity, remaining within the communities associated with these occupations. Even if the status was modest, the women were keen to identify themselves with it.

Although not common, women sometimes used their mothers as a reference point, either in their qualification, or in the body of the will. Marie Bragg describes herself as “singlewoman (daughter and the executrix of the last will and testament of Susan Bragg of Lyme Regis latelie deceased)”, using her role as her mother’s executrix to define herself.[173] A maternal association is also evoked by Dame Elizabeth Berkeley of Bruton in Somerset when she bequeaths to her daughter Margaret “a needlework carpet w^{ch} my mother gave me having the Killigrews armes there upon”.[174] The association with her mother’s coat of arms claims a status not only for the testatrix, but also for her daughter. In the description, she links Margaret to her own mother’s family, ensuring a matrilineal link across the generations and placing her daughter within her grandmother’s family, as well as her father’s. The material object, the carpet, consequently becomes sublimated to the memorialising function with which Elizabeth associates it, carrying with it a raft of connotations, relationships and connections which serve to continue family links after her death.

The fact that women’s credentials generally relied on their marital status does not mean that they never used references to an occupation as part of their self-fashioning. As Whittle observes, wills and probate inventories do not necessarily give the full picture of women’s engagement with paid employment;

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[172] FCW 1651-7/1; TNA PROB11/261/540; PROB11/296/207.

[173] TNA PROB11/209/173. Her father is likely to have been Robert Bragg, who died in 1623, leaving a hundred pounds for his daughter, Marie, and making his wife, Susan executrix of his will (TNA PROB11/141/375). Given that these wills were proved twenty-six years apart, it may well be that Marie was very young at the time of her father’s death and therefore had little memory of him.

[174] TNA PROB11/149/253. Elizabeth was the wife of Sir Maurice Berkeley, who served as MP for Somerset. However, she was also the daughter of William Killigrew who had been a courtier to both Elizabeth I and James VI/I (P.W. Hasler (ed.) *The History of Parliament: the House of Commons 1558-1603* (London: Boydell and Brewer, 1981), <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1558-1603/member/berkeley-sir-maurice-ii-1579-1617> [Accessed 28 August 2018]). Sir Maurice died “far indebted” and that provision made in his will for generous dowries for his daughters was unlikely to have been met (Alistair Bellany, "Killigrew, Sir Robert (1579/80–1633), courtier" *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* online edn, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) [Accessed 20 June 2018]).

their occupations are frequently not mentioned, and tools or equipment used for particular activities might not be included because they may have been leased or rented rather than owned, so that it is not always easy to attribute a trade or profession to individual women.[175] Where occupations are recorded, they are traditionally gendered, involving textile production and service.[176] The conflation of 'spinster' – one who engages in spinning – with unmarried status means that it is difficult to determine whether a woman so designated was in fact engaged in the trade, but in some cases there is evidence to suggest that they were.[177] Sybil Drinckewater of Gloucester leaves "unto everie of my spinners the some of twelve pence apiece", confirming that her use of 'spinster' not only reflected her marital status, but also her occupation.[178] Her references to multiple spinners who are 'hers' suggests large scale production, which Sybil managed. Margaret Wilcox of Colyton, Devon, and Elizabeth Collier of Mintern Magna, Dorset, both identify themselves as 'sempster', but, in each case, the register records them as 'seamstress'.[179] The difference between the two words is subtle, but in recording their occupation as the former, the women were perhaps claiming a degree of skill and expertise that the clerks did not see as important.[180] Although Joane Glyn of Boynton, Devon, describes herself as a weaver and Susan Brownsey of Cheddington, Dorset, is credited as being a lace maker, neither woman makes any reference to their occupation beyond their credentials.[181]

Conversely, other women did not claim their occupation as part of their initial 'I', but their wills include references which situate them within a professional sphere through their bequests and legatees. Several women identify themselves as weavers through the people mentioned and the property which they leave.

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[175] Jane Whittle, 'Enterprising widows' p.288.
[176] Pamela Sharpe notes that the sorts of activities undertaken in the south-west – dairying and textile production – were ones which employed more women than men (*Production and Society in an East Devon Parish: Reproducing Colyton 1540 -1840* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2002), p.93.
[177] "spinster, n." *OED Online* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018) www.oed.com/view/Engry/186771 [Accessed 23 January 2018].
[178] Gloucestershire, England, Wills and Inventories, 1541-1859 *Ancestry.co.uk* 222896.
[179] TNA PROB11/265/161; PROB11/179/426. These descriptions appear in the National Archive register. It is difficult to know when they were added, or by whom.
[180] "seamstress | sempstress, n." *OED Online* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018) www.oed.com/view/Entry/174267 [Accessed 18 May 2018]; "seamster | sempster, n." *OED Online* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018) www.oed.com/view/Entry/174266 [Accessed 18 May 2018].
[181] TNA PROB11/269/462; PROB11/267/23. For a discussion of lacemaking communities, see Pamela Sharpe 'Lace and Place: Women's Business in Occupational Communities 1550-1950' *Women's Historical Review* 19, Issue 2 (2010) 283-306.

Mawde Dawe of Wotton-under-Edge in Gloucestershire classifies her sons as weavers, and makes bequests to the people working for her as spinners and beaters; Johan Vennor of Barnstaple mentions kin who are weavers, giving "unto John Parrot ten shillings in money and ten pounds of pinions and one pair of weaving looms to his two sons" and Susan Cole, also of Barnstaple, bequeaths her son Joseph "my best pair of weaving loombes and all my best weaving ymplements".[182] Although a lack of looms in wills does not necessarily preclude women's weaving activity, the fact that both Johan and Susan leave them, along with their reference to others engaged in the occupation, suggests that they were involved in more substantial production which warranted the ownership of the equipment. Thus, their 'I' is presented as a successful weaver, even if they do not claim the occupation at the outset. These women, either overtly, or inferentially, cast themselves within the textile trade. Their sense of who they were was connected to what they did in life and this was reflected in their appropriation of these occupational markers or their focus on the people and things related to it. Furthermore, omitting information about a previous occupation was as much about self-fashioning as recording it was.

For women working as servants, there was an intimate association of the 'I' with the family with whom they lived and worked.[183] Anne Warren of Bristol does not identify herself as a servant, but her bequests to "Catherine and Jane sometimes my fellow servants" and to "my mistress Mrs Anne Boucher widow", her children, grandchildren and wider family situate her as such.[184] Wilmott Langford was more forthcoming, claiming her status as "servant to the Worshipfull Mistris Katherine Giffard of Hallisbury in the countie of Devon widdow".[185] The inclusion of the descriptor "worshipfull", a signifier of Protestant faith, positions Katherine, and, by association, Wilmott, confirming her beliefs and virtue through their relationship. In some cases, servants used their wills to entail their master or mistress on their behalf. Joan Turner requests that her master

[182] TNA PROB11/247/701; PROB11/288/384; PROB11/211/287. A pinion was a short piece or know of refuse wool produced during combing ("pinion, n.5." *OED Online* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018) www.oed.com/view/Entry/144186 [Accessed 18 May 2018]).
[183] For a discussion of the nature of servitude in the early modern period see Robert J. Steinfeld, 'The Master-Servant Relationship in Early Modern England and the American Colonies' in *The Invention of Free Labor: The Employment Relation in English and American Law and Culture, 1350- 1870* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), pp.15-54.
[184] TNA PROB11/183/519.
[185] TNA PROB11/252/430.

"Rich Hawkinse(on) … gent … bury her decently and conveniently".[186] She does not mention any of her own family but asks that her master fulfil the role that they would otherwise have done. Ann Cornish of Ilfracombe likewise relies on the family for which she worked to see her affairs settled, requiring that the daughter of her master "Nicholas Harpar gent" dispose of the residue of her wearing apparel.[187] In each of these cases, the 'I' is clearly set within the context of another family, situating the testatrix within it, deriving status from it and claiming from it the authority to instruct others. These women might have been servants, but this gave them a certain standing, and the association with the quality of the family confirmed it.[188]

As previously noted, women used their wills to make provision for the education and training of their children, but they also evince women's own engagement in formalised forms of teaching, outside of the domestic sphere. Mary Massenger of Gloucester qualifies herself as 'spinster', and leaves bequests of money to a brother and married sister, and the residue of her estate to another brother. [189] However, in addition to her clothes, she confers on her sister Anne "all her samples of worke and all other things belonging to her said worke and teaching of school". Leaving her "worke" separately draws attention to it, signifying its importance to her. The implied quantity – "all her samples" – suggests a sustained engagement in the activity and a considerable investment in it and the reference to "school" indicates an activity which took place outside of the house. By bequeathing it to her sister, she passes her not only a tangible, textual memorial of herself, but also of her occupation and perhaps a desire that Anne should continue in the profession. Her bequest is not just about her work: it is about how Mary saw herself, how she wanted to be remembered, and how she thought that her legacy might influence her sister.

The implied intention that beneficiaries would continue in a profession or trade in which a testatrix had been involved was also contained in a range of bequests of stock, implements and paraphernalia. Margery Brookebank of Gloucester passes to "my cozen Phillip Ebbes all the tools belonging to my trade

[186] TNA PROB11/160/760.
[187] TNA PROB11/289/124.
[188] See also the previous discussion about Ann Doddington and her self-positioning within the family with whom she was associated.
[189] Kenneth Charlton, *Women, Religion and Education in Early Modern England* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), p.188; TNA PROB11/234/373.

of a sadler", casting both herself and him as practitioners of the trade.[190] Joane Welsh identifies her late husband as "shipwright" and gives "my great pitch kettles" to her grandchild William Shipman.[191] Once again, the use of the pronoun 'my' implies that Joane had been involved in some way in ship building, potentially running her husband's business after his death; in leaving the impedimenta to William, she casts herself as a link in a family tradition, a bridge between her husband and her grandson, ensuring that the activity would continue. In a similar vein, Sara Pitt of Bristol requires her grandson to be "looking to my iron works and other businesses" and instructs her executor to sell, if necessary, "all such right and interest as I shall have at the time of my death in my iron works" in order to fulfil her bequests.[192] This property represents a significant concern and the way in which Sara describes it suggests that she was substantially involved in it. Susanna Smale of Bideford, Devon, assigns to her son "my one half of that fishing boat with that is thereunto belonging now in Jutland and also my half of one other fishing boat with that is thereunto belonging which boat is betwixt Mr Robert Fleming and myself".[193] Alongside this, she gives to "my said daughter Susanna one other quarter part of the said barke or vessel called the Prosperous with all the tackling And furniture there unto belonging And after her death unto her child or children if she shall have any then living". However, in a codicil to the will, she notes that:

> I have change my mind touching the foresaid one quarter part of the said barke or vessel called the Prosperous with the furniture and tackling unto the said one quarter part belonging and touching the said featherbed and feather bolster and my will now is that my daughter Elizabeth Smale shall being executrix shall have the said one quarter part of the said barque and furniture and tackling thereunto belonging.

Susanna's will demonstrates an involvement with commercial activities abroad. Her investment in boats, via part shares, reveals her ambition as a businesswoman. She had spread her risk, putting her money into several boats, and she replicates this in leaving her shares to different children, seeking to continue her entrepreneurialism through the instruction (albeit later retracted) that it be passed to her grandchildren.[194] She therefore imagines herself in the role of

[190] Gloucestershire, England, Wills and Inventories, 1541-1859 *Ancestry.co.uk* 224796.
[191] FCW 1637/5/7.
[192] TNA PROB11/182/86.
[193] TNA PROB11/250/526.
[194] In giving the share to another daughter, she perhaps inferentially presumes that it will be passed on to other grandchildren.

founder of a dynasty of boat owners. There is no suggestion that her children or grandchildren would work the boats, merely that they should serve as owners and, as such, she casts herself as a businesswoman, rather than a worker, and claims her status as such through her bequests.

These trades – ship-building, iron-working and boat-ownership – may have been ones which women had continued following the death of their husbands, having worked alongside them in life. However, Whittle's assertion that widows might have been engaged in their own parallel trades and professions means that the lines between property associated with his occupation and hers is blurred.[195] A similar observation can be made where women make provision for apprentices: they may have been bound to the testatrix's husband, but they may also have been entailed to the women themselves. Jaquette Cole, for example, leaves money to her apprentice, with no mention of the trade to which he or she was bound, and Joane Murdock provides bequests of clothing "unto my apprentice Thomas Cecil a pair of breeches a shirt and a pair of shoes and unto my apprentice James Cecil a pair of breeches a shirt and a pair of shoes" – with no mention of whether Thomas and James were learning her husband's trade of wiredrawing or something else.[196] Keen to ensure his future, Elizabeth Welsteed, widow of Samuel Welsteed, gives "unto my apprentice Samuel Holliday the sum of twenty pounds to place him out to some other master to serve the residue of his term which shalbe to come and unexpired at this time of my decease".[197] Holliday witnessed the wills of both Samuel and Elizabeth, suggesting that, following Samuel's death, he had continued under his mistress' employ and tutelage, but whether this was in Samuel's trade or hers is unclear. Elizabeth's desire to place him with another master may reflect this professional relationship but may also suggest a more personal concern for him. That these women made provision for their apprentices or made arrangements for their ongoing training, demonstrates a desire to ensure their charges' future and the presumed authority to do so. Whether these apprentices were the

[195] Whittle, 'Enterprising Widows'. See also Jane Whittle and Mark Hailwood 'The Gender Division of Labour in Early Modern England' *Economic History Review* (2018) 1-30 (pp.7-8) <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/epdf/10.1111/ehr.12821?author_access_token=qC2fa7jiJsVg4dZADMxZl4ta6bR2k8jH0KrdpFOxC67PDymL1f8bnrpdhOvQT6IvXJniiQmXh9siAp_0cZ-InMcH28NQs_iwfth01IjM7Yyxs1WWMFPkr3RmwA4QePd4> [Accessed 21 February 2019].
[196] TNA PROB11/208/35; PROB11/156/94. These apprentices may well be the sons of Elizabeth Secill, her sister-in-law, who, two years earlier, had named her apprentices, Symon Cecil and Thomas Cecil, who appear to be relatives (TNA PROB11/151/355).
[197] TNA PROB11/270/13.

woman's or remained with her after the death of her husband to continue running the trade, they formed part of the testatrix's sphere and of her self-fashioning as a businesswoman.

Neither were the businesses with which the women associated themselves confined to the local. The port of Barnstaple was a centre of commerce and part of the flourishing woollen industry, trading to all known parts of the world, and women's wills reflected the role that they played in this commerce.[198] Mary Smith, for example, leaves "wares, merchandizes" as well as goods, chattels, lands and tenements "either here or in St Christopher or in any other part of the world wheresoever" and bequeaths "unto Anne Halykeeck my kinswoman five hundred pound worth of Tobacco", indicating her participation in international trade.[199] Tobacco also features in the will of Anne Hancock of Bristol who leaves "the beams scales weights to bacco press and other impliments and things in my shop belonging to my trade of soapmaking and chandling".[200] She makes no reference to her husband's occupation, but claims soap making and chandelling as her own and the designation of "my shop" establishes her involvement in these businesses. Her interests are varied, a diversification which mirrors the range of businesses present in Bristol at the time; that Anne was involved in all three might have been as a result of merging her husband's concerns with her own, undertaken during his life, or it might have been an attempt to make money by whatever means she could.[201] These women, then, may not make overt claims for their commercial activities in their qualification, but their bequests demonstrate the scope of the trade in which they were engaged, through their references to imported goods, and to real or personal property in other countries. Their inclusion of this property in their wills demonstrates the

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[198] *Barnstaple Town Centre* <http://www.barnstapletowncentre.co.uk/history.htm> [Accessed 28 August 2018].

[199] TNA PROB11/201/608. Tobacco was grown on St. Christopher's, or St. Kitts, in the 1620s and 1630s ('About St. Kitts' *St. Christopher National Trust* <http://www.stkittsheritage.com/?page_id=464> [Accessed 28 August 2017]).

[200] TNA PROB11/228/537.

[201] John Latimer records that "[i]n July, 1634, proclamation was made in Bristol that the King forbade the making of soap for private domestic use, and prohibited the importation of foreign, Irish or Scotch soap. Bristol had then enjoyed a great repute for its soap for four hundred years, and the soapmakers were numerous and their business extensive when this monopoly was created…In a petition dated May, 1635, the local manufacturers made an earnest appeal against a new order issued by the Privy Council forbidding them to vend soap outside Bristol save to Wales and the Western ports, and requiring them to pay an additional tax to the King of £4 per ton, a burden which they declared would simply be ruinous. No relief, however, was accorded beyond permission to sell in Wilts and Gloucestershire" (John Latimer, *The Annals of Bristol in the Seventeenth Century* (Bristol: William George's Sons, 1900), p.121).

extent to which women saw such engagement as part of their self-fashioning, casting themselves as businesswomen and communicating ideas of success and influence, both at home and abroad.

* * *

Where the roles of scribe, witnesses, executors, overseers and so forth are employed in drama, these characters appear physically on the stage. Antonio is appointed to scribe the Duchess' will; Penthea acknowledges her role as her own scribe. Cariola is given explicit instructions to bear witness to the writing of the Duchess' testament, whilst the presence of Goodlack and Forest on the edge of the scene in which Spencer articulates his intentions renders them *de facto* witnesses. Calantha, the Alderman and Mayor are named as executor; Bolsola acts as such. As well as these on-stage players, the audience is also positioned as an actor in the will-making process, witnessing the production and reading of the wills and serving as inferential overseers; it is the audience who will ultimately see whether the testatrix's intentions are fulfilled. These roles are all determined and controlled by the playwright and, like the content of the fictional wills themselves, they are contingent upon the dramatic requirements of the plot. Knowledge of the form of the will facilitates the audience's understanding and this means that the legal technicalities such as the commendation are rendered unnecessary and these aspects remain unspoken, the focus being placed on those aspects of the will which further the playwright's intent.

Real-life wills contain the narrated presence of these people and this survey demonstrates not only the range of people cast by women in their wills, but also the extent to which they exercised control over them, appointing them to act on their behalf and presuming their co-operation. Although they did not usually pen their wills themselves, evidence from examples written by the same scribe reveals the extent to which women were engaged in negotiating and directing what was written. Whereas historians have debated the extent to which the preamble can be read as an unproblematic reflection of the testatrix's beliefs, I have argued that it should be seen as jointly constructed, with scribal formulations being omitted, altered or expanded in consultation with the testatrix. This collaboration served to cast the testatrix as an 'intentional' author who initiated the production of the text and supplied the content to be framed within a

legal template. Neither was the scribe the only person a woman entailed. Testatrices entered into *de facto* contracts with preachers whom they engaged to preach funeral sermons on their behalf, directing their own memorialisation and, in the case of Ann Doddington, even providing the text on which the sermon should be based. To see their wills proved, women appointed executors, overseers and witnesses, “loving” or “trusted” friends, or called on local dignitaries to ensure that their affairs were properly settled. These people were rewarded for their efforts, but there was still a clear expectation of compliance and service and the will allowed a testatrix the authority to direct these people to act on her behalf. The majority of the people named in a will were beneficiaries, but the ways in which these people, and the gifts they were given, were described, was not neutral. Rather, the framing of both encoded the relationships between legatee and testatrix, demonstrating the degree of esteem in which they were held. Where charity was given, the testatrix cast a deserving poor, situating them in relation to herself and her kinship networks and extending her own moral judgements into a future in which she would not be present. However, the starring role in the will went to the woman herself. Proximity to death gave women the right to write and they used this license to fashion the self which they wanted to be remembered. Wills go far beyond a catalogue of property and its recipients to present a portrait of the woman, her relationships, her beliefs, her social concerns and her priorities. The text of her will is her metaphorical last breath and with it the testatrix gives an account of herself and creates her own textual monument.

Chapter Three

Mise en Scène

The company of scribes, witnesses, priests and others present in women's wills attests to the social nature of will-writing, and, by extension, of the deathbed itself. These people attended the dying, visiting them in their sickness, consoling them and their families, offering practical and spiritual support. Their presence rendered the deathbed "a highly structured cultural site", one which was fashioned by both custom and affection and which created a semi-public setting in which death took place.[1] Under the doctrine of Protestantism, the "moment [of death] had enduring consequence"; with no chance of intercession on behalf of the dying, "there is no longer any point in trying to fool anyone, but God must be confronted directly" and, as "one of the truest tests of sincerity", the presence of others was important to bear witness to it.[2] Will-writing frequently formed a part of this deathbed scene and the act itself is often made visible in the document.

It is not, though, the only scene which was created in women's wills. In giving things associated with her past, a woman recalled the life she was leaving; in passing them on to her beneficiaries, she sought to influence their future, situating her as part of a continuum. Thus, the will contained within it the past, the present, and the future, creating a particular temporal texture. As Wendy Wall observes:

> The will is a peculiar document: it is written in the present tense and includes its imagined enactment in the future, but it is authorized by a past voice … It is because of the strange time frame involved in the concept of the will, that the writer is able to express, sanctify, and preserve his or her immediate desires. The voice that speaks is strangely present and absent, a ghostly corpse that undergoes a reckoning and asserts fervently held beliefs and desires. The very power of this speaking position rests in its doubleness: in the anticipated movement toward death, in the sanctity of the final departure. It is a strangely performative and self-constituting gesture dependent on the erasure of the subject at the very moment of powerful self-assertion.[3]

[1] Ryrie, Alec, *Being Protestant in Reformation Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015) p.468.
[2] Ryrie, pp.461-2.
[3] Wendy Wall, *The Imprint of Gender* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1994), pp.285-6.

Wall's tripartite division into the authorisation of the past voice, the present tense of the writing and the future in which the desires will be enacted implies that the notions of past, present and future can be unproblematically constructed and applied. Such a trichotomy is, however, too simplistic; wills in fact contain numerous time-frames which were used and manipulated as part of a woman's self-fashioning and as a way of enhancing their memorialisation. The existence and deliberate control of time-frames creates a heterochronous texture, with different "slices of time" co-existing within a will.[4] In addition, the presentation of the past and present self, and the projection of a future one mean that different iterations of the testatrix exist panchronically in the will, further problematising straightforward concepts of time.

This chapter will consider how women used their wills to situate themselves in a range of tableaux. It will move from women's active participation in their own deathbed scenes to an exploration of the ways in which they used the legal document to recall specific and important aspects of their lives, established through the gifting of items – props and costumes – which evoked the scenes with which they wished to be associated. These scenes were subjectively constructed, selective and sanitised as the testatrix sought to fashion a self through them. Neither was this self-fashioning restricted to scenes from the past, as testatrices used their wills as a way of directing acts which would take place after their death, making detailed arrangements for their funeral scene and dictating actions which would memorialise them in the future. Clothes, jewellery and plate were left by women not only as bequests, but also as *memento mori*, objects which contained the memory of the testatrix and through which she wanted to be remembered.

The Deathbed

The social and semi-public nature of the deathbed and of the will-writing process reflected in wills echoes the descriptions of the place and process contained in *ars moriendi* texts.[5] These built on the fifteenth century *Tractus, artis bene*

[4] Michel Foucault, (trans. Jay Miskowiec) 'Of Other Spaces' *Diacritics* Vol 16, No. 1. (1986) 22-27 (p.26). The issues raised by the translation of the original French are discussed in Peter Johnson, 'Unravelling Foucault's 'different spaces'' *History of the Human Sciences* Vol. 19, No. 4, (2006) 75-90.

[5] For a discussion of *ars moriendi* texts, see Nancy Beaty, *The Craft of Dying: A Study in the literary tradition of the Ars Moriendi in England* (New Haven: Yale Studies in English, 1971);

moriendi, Speculum Artis Moriendi or *De Arte Moriendi* and its related but shorter block book version *Ars Moriendi,* which offered in visual form the temptations to which the dying were subjected, along with the remedies for them. Following the Reformation, the focus of these texts shifted from the resistance of these deathbed struggles to teaching reformed ideas about dying well and a number of such tracts were published in the sixteenth- and seventeenth-centuries by theologians and clerics such as William Perkins, Thomas Becon and Jeremy Tayler.[6] These cast *moriens* as uniformly male, but the good deaths of women were also used as part of the same pedagogical endeavour.[7] Diary accounts, chronicles, sermons and pamphlets were all employed as ways of making available information about how women had died, presenting them as exempla, and reproducing the fictionalised accounts contained in *ars moriendi*.

These descriptions of women's good deaths encapsulate the desirable behaviours exhibited by the dying woman and took a number of forms – funeral sermons, diaries and pamphlets – but they share several features. Firstly, they contradict the now outmoded idea that "the art of speech … for … women … was reduced for the most part to one simple rule: Silence", by praising the women's restrained speech in life and giving primacy to their speech acts as they approached death.[8] The "cliché", as Christina Luckyj describes it, that writing for and about women was designed to cast them as "chaste, silent and obedient" is, in fact, contradicted by the literature itself.[9] Whilst writers cautioned against "unsavorie talk" and argued that "too much speech implieth an usurpation of authoritie", William Gouge argues not that women should be silent, but should

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Kirsty Owen, *Identity, Commemoration and the Art of Dying Well* (Oxford: British Archaeological Reports, 2010); David W. Atkinson, *The English Ars Moriendi* (Bern and New York: Peter Lang. 1992); Ralph A. Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion, and the Family in England 1480-1750* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988); Philippe Ariès, *The Hour of Our Death* (New York: Knopf, 1981).

[6] William Perkins *A Salue for a Sicke Man* (London: John Legat, 1607); Thomas Becon *The Sicke Mans Salve* (London: John Daye, 1577); Jeremy Tayler *The Rule and Exercise of Holy Dying* (London: R.R., 1651).

[7] Beaty uses the term *moriens* for the dying man. As the nominative singular form of the participle of the verb *morior* is not sensitive to grammatical gender - female male and neuter referents can be referred to as *moriens*, and so I use it to refer to women as well as men (*Oxford Latin Dictionary* ed. by P.G.W. Glare (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012)).

[8] Ruth Kelso, *Doctrine for the Lady of the Renaissance* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1956), p.50.

[9] Christina Luckyi '"A Moving Rhetoricke": Women's Silences and Renaissance Texts'*Renaissance Drama,* New Series, Vol.24 (1993) pp.33-56 (p.35); Suzanne Hull *Chaste, Silent and Obedient* English Books for Women, 1475-1640 (San Marino: Huntington Library Press, 1998).

not be given "to loquacity, to talkativeness, to over-much tattling".[10] In death, modest speech was seen as desirable and was recorded as a way of evincing the final piety of the dying woman. For John Evelyn, it was important to note, in his diary account of his mother's demise, that Eleanor Evelyn's deathbed utterances were "pious" and "Christian", foregrounding her speech, but claiming the general quality of it, rather than the words themselves.[11] Similarly, Alice Thornton's account of the death of her sister, Catherine Danby, makes much of Catherine's "discourse" which was "very good and profitable" and the fact that she "poured out her soule in praier with such comprehensive and good expressions that could be for her owne soule, for pardon and remission of her sinnes, for grace and sanctification from the Spiritt, faith and assurance", rather than quoting her.[12] Indeed, Catherine's vocalisation of her faith went beyond prayers to include singing; she "would sweetly, with a melodious voice, sing aloud His praise and glory in anthems and psallmes proper for her condition, with many sweet verces praising Him for all things", providing, as do Penthea and Calantha in *The Broken Heart,* a soundtrack for her death.[13] Mary Sidney was praised by her biographer, Edward Molyneux, for the "good speech, apt and readie conceipt, excellence of wit, and delectable and notable eloquent deliverie" which she had displayed in life, and he demonstrates how this was reflected on her deathbed in the way that she used her utterances to "exhort" and "dehort" those who visited her, using "her godlie speeches, earnest and effectual persuasion" to admonish them to follow her example".[14] The link between speech in life and on the deathbed is also illustrated by Philip Stubbes who is keen to record that his wife,

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[10] William Whately *A Bride-bush; Or, a Direction for Married Persons* (London: Felix Kyngston, 1619), p.203; William Gouge *Of Domesticall Duties* (London: John Haviland, 1622), p.282.
[11] John Evelyn, *The Diary of John Evelyn* ed. by William Bray (London: Dent, 1966), p.7.
[12] Alice Thornton, *The Life of Mrs Alice Thornton* (Durham: The Surtees Society, 1878), pp.51-2.
[13] Thornton, p.52. Psalm-singing was a feature of puritan worship. Close translations of the verses into English were set to easy to sing English meter, with allowed everyone to participate in worship (Charles E. Hambrick-Stowe, 'Practical divinity and spirituality' in *The Cambridge Companion to Puritanism* ed. by John Coffey and Paul C.H. Lim, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp.200-1)). Anthems were an Anglican invention, the equivalent of the Catholic Latin motet. They also used the Holy Scripture as their texts, but, unlike psalms, were more complex in design and written for a choir, rather than the congregation (Nicholas Temperley 'Anthem', in *The Oxford Companion to Music* ed. by Alison Latham (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986) < http://0-www.oxfordreference.com.lib.exeter.ac.uk/view/10.1093/acref/9780199579037.001.0001/acref-9780199579037-e-315?rskey=4rMqPc&result=357> [Accessed 29 August 2018]); John Ford, *'Tis Pity She's a Whore and other plays* ed. by Marion Lomax (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp.81-163.
[14] Raphael Holinshed, *Chronicles* (London: Henry Denham, 1587), p.1455.

Katherine, in life "obeyed the commandment of the Apostle, who biddeth women to be silent and to learn of their husbands at home", but claims the words he attributes to her as she was dying to be verbatim, even assigning to them the way in which they were delivered: "[s]ometimes she would speak very softly to herself, and sometimes very audibly … [o]thersome times she would lie as if she were in a slumber, her eyes closing, her lips uttering these words very softly to herself".[15] In describing how Katherine delivered her lines, Stubbes reverse-engineers her script, complete with directions as to how lines should be delivered in his desire to ensure that she was seen to have died well. These accounts all record the fact that the dying woman spoke, but, the descriptions of how confirm that they did so within the bounds of what was acceptable for a woman.

Another shared feature, and one which the recording of their words allowed the writer to confirm, was the willingness with which these women greeted death, their ready eschewal of the worldly and their lack of fear at their demise. Eleanor Evelyn bore her sickness in "heavenly" manner, with "admirable patience and a most Christian resignation", before "with elevated heart & eyes, she quietly expired and resigned her soul to God".[16] Recording Eleanor's gestures allows Evelyn to reinforce the veracity of his account.[17] This resignation is also clear on the part of Catharine Danby whom, Alice Thornton records, was not "in the least conserned [*sic*] to part with her husband or children, nor any thing in this world".[18] This desirable disposition was not, however, necessarily easily won. As Alec Ryrie asserts, "[t]he deathbed was, and was universally expected to be, the arena for the last and greatest spiritual confrontation of the Protestant life" and accounts frequently include an exploration of how this confrontation was experienced and overcome.[19] John Angier draws attention to the struggles his wife Ellen underwent in coming to God which "exercised her with much weakness

[15] Philip Stubbes, *A Chrystall Glasse for Christian Women* (London: Iohn Writght,1633). Unpaginated.
[16] Evelyn, p.7.
[17] Ferdinand Pulton *De Pace Regis et Regni,* (London: Companie of Stationers, 1609), p.193. See chapter one for a discussion of this idea in relation to John Ford's *The Broken Heart.* This translation of words into gestures was also noted in chapter two in regard to the will of Thomazine Halswell (TNA PROB11/152/522) in chapter two and will be seen in the account of the death of Lucy Reynell in chapter four.
[18] Thornton, p.51. Wendy Wall charts that the concerns of Catherine Danby "generally evolve from internal and private issues – namely the well-being of her soul – to the familial and domestic, and finally to politics and the public world" (Wendy Wall, *The Imprint of Gender* p.290).
[19] Ryrie, p.464.

of body, great distemper in her head and unkindness of friends which did much afflict her", so that her eventual acceptance of death was all the more remarkable.[20] Similarly, Philip Stubbes highlights the final struggles of his wife as she endured "[a] most wonderful conflict between Satan and her soul, and of her valiant conquest of the same, by the power of Christ", before finally she "slept sweetly in the Lord".[21] These accounts clearly demonstrate the desire of the biographers to record the women's good deaths, holding them as exempla of Christian piety and to position themselves in relation to it by stressing their proximal relationship to the dying women.

Demonstrating the good death of these women meant negotiating a course through the doctrine of female silence, the judicious use of reasoned speech and a way of communicating the evidentiary basis of the biographers' claims for the pious lives and deaths of those they were presenting as exempla. That these women had accepted their death, had offered their souls to God and had rejected earthly concerns could only be demonstrated through the words that they said and the manner in which they said them. The importance of this is confirmed by the fact that, even where the author was not actually present at the end, they felt it expedient to supply the words that the dying woman had supposedly uttered. John Evelyn and his siblings had been dismissed by their mother before she spoke to his father, yet Evelyn reconstructs their conversation.[22] Similarly, Alice Thornton's attribution of Catherine Danby's final words is via the report of "a cairefull servant" Dafeny Lightfoote.[23] In some cases, this physical distance between the writer and the dying woman is mirrored in the temporal distance between the event and the writing of the account; Philip Stubbes, for example, published his account of Katherine's death two years after the event, which calls into question the accuracy of his supposedly verbatim

[20] Oliver Heywood, *Life of John Angier of Denton* (Manchester: Chetham Society, 1937), p.123.
[21] Stubbes, n. p.
[22] Evelyn, p.7.
[23] Thornton, p.51-2. Her use of the word careful serves to denote not only the provision of care, but also that the servant to have been "full of grief; mournful, sorrowful" representing not only Dafeny's duty, but also the extent to which Catherine's death has affected her, thus redoubling Alice's assessment of her sister's goodness ("careful, adj." *Oxford English Dictionary Online,* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016) http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/27916 [30 August 2016]). Dafne is also credited with helping Alice's mother, Dame Alice Wandesford to achieve a holy death: "'And Dafeny perceaved she drew her breath short, and goeing to depart, praied her that she would give them that was with her some signe that she found the comfort of God's Spiritt in her soule, with a taste of the joyes of heaven, which she immeadiatly did, to all theire great comforts." (Thornton, p.115).

account.[24] In each case, there is a degree of selective reconstruction, invention or embroidery. The women's speech is the only way of demonstrating their good death, but it has to be reconstituted and reimagined after the event and is necessarily somewhat fictionalised.

Despite the hagiographic nature of these accounts, however, they cannot be read as unproblematic reflections of the good deaths of women but have to be understood within the context in which they were written. Molyneux, for instance, had suffered career frustrations mirroring those of his master, Henry Sidney, and may have seen his contribution to Holinshed's *Chronicles* as a way of reinstating himself within the sphere of the Sidney family.[25] Nor can Alice Thornton's presentation of her sister be read as straightforward, as she revised her diary and used it to support her position in family disputes; as a result, the account of Catherine's death may have been edited for Alice's purposes.[26] The descriptions of women's good deaths in funeral sermons were similarly used for purposes beyond simple teaching and example. That preached for Katherine Brettergh was published in refutation of the Catholic accusation "that she died despairing, & by her comfortlesse end shewed that she professed a comfortlesse Religion";[27] John Ley's sermon for Jane Ratcliffe includes an "explicit refutation of both papist and Brownist claims that the Church of England lacked true piety and godliness amongst its members".[28] Whilst, ostensibly, such doctrinal confirmation served to challenge the accusations made about the women who were unable to defend themselves, it also ensured that the position of their husbands, families and indeed the priest who preached the sermon was declared and affirmed.

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[24] Stubbes, n.p.
[25] Peter Sherlock, "Molyneux, Edmund (d.1605)," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* online edn, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) [Accessed 26 August 2016].
[26] Ann Hughes "Thornton, Alice (1626-1707)" *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* online edn, (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2004) [Accessed 26 August 2016].
[27] William Harrison and William Leigh, *Deaths Aduantage* (London: Felix Kyngston, 1612). As Patrick Collinson asserts, the "convention of curious titles was formalized" by the time of the publication of *Threnoikos* and women's sermons followed the same pattern (Collinson, p.522).
[28] Peter Lake, 'Feminine Piety and Personal Potency: The 'Emancipation' of Mrs Jane Ratcliffe' *The Seventeenth Century,* 2:2 (2013) 143-165 (p.146). Brownists were adherents of Robert Browne, a religious separatist who believed that the ecclesiastical system was unscriptual and sought to work outside the established Church (M.E. Moody, 'Browne, Robert (1550?–1633)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) < http://0-www.oxforddnb.com.lib.exeter.ac.uk/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-3695?rskey=lRwa6G&result=1> [Accessed 30 August 2016]).

In addition to this post-mortem eschewal of accusations of impiety, written accounts of women's final moments also sought to demonstrate their performance of their domestic responsibility. Providing spiritual guidance to her household was part of the duties of the mistress of the house, and one which again features in dying well texts.[29] Thus Eleanor Evelyn not only administered direction to her children and her husband, but "[t]here was not a servant in the house, whom she did not expressly send for, advise, and infinitely affect with her counsell".[30] Similarly, Mary Sidney's deathbed was a site of visitation and Molyneux comments that "all those about hir" were the "amazed and astonished" audience for her "zeale and pietie".[31] At the end of their lives, the women's fulfilment of duty, responsibility and piety were clearly articulated and offered as exempla. In printing these accounts, this ministry was reproduced and distributed, extending their sphere of influence. Servants and visitors thus bore witness to the women's final moments, corroborating what the sermonisers, chroniclers, diarists and pamphleteers reported, and populated the deathbed scenes in which the woman herself had centre-stage.

These ideas – of women's good deaths as examples and patterns for emulation, of the potential benefits to the person recording them, of the use of speech as a vehicle for demonstrating final piety and acceptance – will be explored further in chapter four which will consider the case of Lucy Reynell and her nephew's account of her life and death.[32] Such narratives were unusual and were reserved for women of position, wealth and note, but many of the ideas encapsulated in them can be seen in women's wills – in documents composed by women themselves. Indeed, the writing of a will, the setting of one's house in order and planning for the disposal of worldly goods, in itself reflects the messages of *ars moriendi* texts. Whilst some thought writing a will was portentous, doing so when in health was to be commended, and some women

[29] Gervase Markham's *The English house-wyfe* calls for a woman to be a "zealous and constant" example without "utter[ing] forth that violence of spirit which many of our … women doe, drawing a contempt vpon the ordinary Ministry" (Gervase Markham, *The English house-wyfe* (London: Nicholas Oxes for John Harrison, 1631), pp. 2-3). Markham's injunction against women emulating the preaching behaviours of men is somewhat threatened by Molyneaux's description of Mary Sidney's ministry.
[30] Evelyn, p.7.
[31] Holinshed, p.879.
[32] Edward Reynell, *The Life and Death of the religious and virtuous Lady, the Lady Lucie Reynell of Ford in Devon: Who dyed the 18th of Aprill 1652 Whereunto is annexed A consolatory Epilogue for defected soules* (London: Henry Seile, 1654).

made explicit their desire to settle their affairs in order to die well, citing a number of factors for doing so.[33] Anne Ingram of Tewkesbury, for example, despite being "of reasonable health of body (my age considered)", was prompted to write her will because of "many late spectacles of mortality" which have illustrated for her "the uncertainty of life and certainty of death".[34] Similarly, Joan Smith of Tavistock was "neither sicke in body nor disturbed in mind" but, "calling to remembrance the mutability of this vain world and the transitory life thereof the frailty of mankind and how necessary a thing it is for all Christians to be in continual readiness whensoever the pleasure of almighty God shalbe to call us", prepared her will against her death, whenever it might occur.[35] This idea of the fickleness of life is also evoked by Mary Bartlett who acknowledges herself to be "duly considering the uncertainty of this transitory life and therefore purposing by god his assistance not to be unprovided for spiritual and temporal causes at the time of my deliverance out of this wretched world".[36] These women clearly state their desire to decide on the disposal of their worldly goods and write a will in order to do so whilst still in health, so that they might better focus on achieving a good death, whenever that might occur, unencumbered by earthly concerns.

Wills written significantly in advance of death were relatively rare, and nuncupative wills in particular were generally fixed to the point immediately before death. However, that of Susan Attwood was, according to her scribe, rehearsed "divers times within the quarter of a year last past and especially within six weeks before her decease".[37] This suggests an extended period of illness, during the course of which Susan sought to set her affairs in order. Wills such as these, written before imminent death and over a period of time, create indeterminate and undeterminable scenes of will-writing, removing the process from the deathbed and rendering the activity moveable, both temporally and geographically. In Susan's case, the prolonged and repetitious activity extended

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[33] Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion,* p.92; The *Book of Common Prayer* exhorts ministers to urge the dying "if he have not afore disposed his goodes, let him then make his will. (But men must be oft admonished that they set an ordre for theyr temporall goodes and lands when they be in helth.)" ('The Ordre for the buriall of the dead 1649' in *The Book of Common Prayer 1549, 1559 and 1662* ed. by Brian Cummings (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), p.82). Its replacement, *A Directory for the Publique Worship of God,* does not specifically mention writing a will, but does require that people are admonished "in time of health to prepare for death" (*A Directory For the Publique Worship of God* (London: M.B., 1646), p.31).
[34] TNA PROB11/182/390.
[35] TNA PROB11/161/426. The will is dated the twenty-first of February 1630 and was proved on the thirteenth of April 1632.
[36] TNA PROB11/155/113.
[37] TNA PROB11/196/403.

the timescale of composition, creating, potentially, multiple scenes of will-writing, numerous visits by the scribe (and maybe the witnesses) and constituting the act as peripatetic. As such, the idea of the present tense of writing becomes un-stabilised and the will becomes heterochronous, containing presents which were re-established each time the document was revisited.

The majority of wills were anchored to the deathbed, and some make clear reference to this, explicitly situating the dying woman within this particular time and place. Edith Guppie of Lyme Regis, for instance, creates a deathbed scene which has been dictated by the sickness she has borne.[38] She refers to "Gods long visitation of me with my last sickness" and acknowledges the care of "my youngest daughter Susan Guppie who hath most dutifully and painfully attended me" during its course, thus placing both herself and her daughter at her deathbed. Likewise, Margaret Dobbs was "lieing sicke upon her bed of the sickness whereof she died" when she made her will in 1640, a report which positions her in a specific room within her home.[39] These descriptions explicitly situate the testatrix in her bed and associate the action of writing a will with that physical and temporal space.

Even where there is no explicit reference to the bed, it is implicit in women's wills where the cause of their death is recorded. Ann Peeters, was "visited with the plague of which sickness she died", a description which inferentially places her on her deathbed.[40] As already discussed in chapter two, Jane Godwin died from the plague shortly after her husband had succumbed to the same disease and their wills are recorded next to one another in the register.[41] The way in which her bequests are couched suggests that, despite her illness, her deathbed was populated by the people to whom she gives her property: her son who receives her wedding ring; her maid who is given money; the unfortunate William Hopwood who is bequeathed "all her husbands wearing apparel which he had on when he fell sick" and her father to whom she leaves her son "and did desire him to breed him up as his own". This implication means that, even where the woman was dying of plague, her deathbed was a social site and this is confirmed by the will of Alice Stone who was also "visited with the pestilence" and

[38] TNA PROB11/171/162.
[39] Gloucestershire, England, Wills and Inventories, 1541-1858 (*Ancestry.co.uk*) 223699.
[40] Bristol Archive FCW1646/1/29.
[41] TNA PROB11/194/401.

whose scribe records the direct address made to "her daughter Mary Sharp the wife of James Sharpe" to whom she leaves the majority of her property. [42] Although, in these cases, the deathbed is not explicitly mentioned, the nature of the women's condition made it inferentially present, but the company in attendance ensured that it was still a place where the women could demonstrate their good deaths.

Beds themselves were not only places to sleep but also encoded "hopes of fertility and family longevity". [43] At death, the prospects of both were extinguished for *moriens*, but were passed on to the person to whom the bed was gifted; it, and its attendant furnishings comprise a substantial tranche of the property left by women in their wills. Margery Davis of Wells, for instance, "sicke in body and lying in her bed at Wokey Hole aforesaid in the house of her mother", gives a bed – presumably the one in which she was lying – to her brother.[44] In doing so, despite its associations with her death, Margery was passing on her anticipation of the continuation of her family through her brother. Along with the bed, Margery leaves its attendant "blanket coverlet and … pillow", items which, as well as being practical, were closely associated with Margery. They were the visible parts of the bed, the furnishings amongst which she was seen and therefore represented a material link with her. When Anne Fownes gives to

> Penelope Claxton one of the said six children my best featherbed made by my self, a feather bolster two pillows one pair of my best blankets my best watchet coloured rug two pairs of flaxen sheets two pairs of canvas sheets one pair of pillowbeers and big trunk in the great chamber

there is no indication that this was the bed in which she slept, but it is a bed which she has made.[45] What it lacks in physical association with Anne's sleeping, reproductive and ultimately dying body, is redressed by the reminder that it was the product of her own hands and it thus gains the status of heirloom. That she describes her "best featherbed" as "made by my self" draws attention again to the fact that there was more than one bed, but also associates her endeavours with quality. Its designation as handmade signifies the pride with which Anne regards the object and, in describing it thus as she passes it to her

[42] Bristol Archive FCW1646/1/21.
[43] Jane Whittle and Elizabeth Griffiths, *Consumption & Gender in the Early Seventeenth-Century Household* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), p.3.
[44] TNA PROB11/168/535.
[45] TNA PROB11/158/377.

granddaughter, she is also passing on to her the effort and time that it has taken to make. It is not merely a material object, or a practical place to sleep: it is also indicative of Anne's status as a woman with time and skill enough to create such a thing, a reminder of her handiness, an example to her granddaughter and an expression of her love.[46]

Where testatrices left multiple gifts of beds, it is possible to see a variety of intentions at play. Mary Yate leaves her servant, Margaret Willmot, "my least feather bed and bolster one pair of blankets a new pair of flaxen sheets and one orange colour coverlet and the undermost flock bed where she lieth and a little pillow and pillowcase" and "the bedstead bed mat" which belong to her bed.[47] With Mary's death, Margaret keeps her own bed, but also receives a feather bed – albeit the "least" one – which represents an improvement on her current sleeping arrangements. However, Margaret bequeaths "my best home made coverlet and also my feather bed I lie on" to her cousin, Elizabeth Broad. These gifts, which were wrought by Mary's hand or existed in direct contact with her body, link Mary corporeally to Elizabeth. The homemade nature of the coverlet would serve as a visible reminder of her cousin, whilst the quotidianly-used bed would serve as a tactile one. This desire to establish an enduring link with her beneficiaries is also evident in the case of Elizabeth Banester who leaves the bedstead which is in the "great chamber" of his mother's house and the "bedstead which my mother lay on And the bedstead whereon I used to lie on now in a chamber of the same house called my mothers chamber" to her nephew.[48] These descriptions not only create past scenes of her living with her mother, and of her sister-in-law's house, but also enact social webs. She owns the bed in her late brother's house, and it sits alongside her late mother's bed and one which she used to use, linking the women together through the contents of the house which are now to be passed to her nephew. Thus, bequests of beds could serve to place women in multiple homes. Joane Weale's bequest of "my best bedstead which I have in my house at Brislington that which she likes best there" to her

[46] James notes that "[t]he identification of each of these items in her will as a product of her own hands not only elevated the specific piece but recalled the creator's pride in her own creative ... [and] conveyed the object to the legatee wrapped in a sense of privilege and friendship" (p.83).
[47] TNA PROB11/228/20. A flockbed or flock mattress was one stuffed with coarse tufts of wool ("flock, n.2." *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018) <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/71777> [Accessed 19 June 2018]).
[48] TNA PROB11/253/388.

granddaughter-in-law serves not only to place her in two houses – the one in which she wrote her will and her other house at Brislington – but also, in giving Mary the choice, indicates that there was more than one bedstead there.[49] Where the recipient was not yet ready to receive their bequest, there was an expectation that it would be delayed, because of the value of the object. Joane Welsh, for example, instructs that her "best feather bed and feather bolster my green rug and the best pair of sheets that I have" be delivered when her recipient reached twenty-one.[50] There is no indication of what should happen to these things before that time: Joane merely assumes that they would endure and be passed on when she dictated.

The deathbed upon which most women wrote was reproduced in the bequests of beds which they left. Beds were valuable commodities, intimately associated with the testatrix and sites imbued with a raft of generative and reproductive meanings which were passed on with them. When the woman died in the bed, it also represented a form of *memento mori,* a physical reminder of the inevitability of death and, by placing the bed in other people's houses, the testatrix projected herself, her life and her death into their homes.[51]

Other Spaces

Susan James observes that "[o]ne of the most useful aspects of wills and their appended inventories are the descriptions of the assemblages of material culture with which women surrounded themselves", and suggests that

> Only in a will-maker's testament are items of special importance singled out, those things that linked her to the past, to memorable events, to the people who shared them, and to those whom she had chosen to carry her memory into the future. Each object curated during the will-maker's lifetime and personally selected as a bequest had a human value as well as an intrinsic one.[52]

The way that objects are described reflects the esteem in which they were held by the testatrix, the meaning that they had for her and the value, intrinsic and extrinsic, which she attributed to them. Items were singled out, bundled together, combined or separated by the women and given to individuals selected because

[49] TNA PROB11/164/490.
[50] Bristol Archives FCW1637/5.
[51] James notes that beds parallel "the eternal resting place of the deceased in the parish church" (p.87).
[52] James, p.231.

of their need, or the esteem in which the testatrix held them. Margreta De Grazia, Maureen Quilligan and Peter Stallybrass describe "object" as "that which is *thrown* before", a definition which emphasises the prior status of the item.[53] These objects are the things which the testatrix had owned in the past and occupied a "temporal, spatial, even causal" position within her life.[54] As such, their presence in the will, and their imagined presence in scenes beyond it serve to render the will as heterochronic, with items existing simultaneously in the past, the present and the future. Whereas, in *vanitas* paintings, the objects on display have "evicted the subject", items in the will, rather than effacing the giver, recall her and women used their bequests to evoke their lives and to ensure their memorialisation.[55]

Whilst beds and bedrooms were the furnishings most frequently left by testatrices, they were by no means the only domestic sets which were bequeathed. In some instances, houses were divided between legatees, with the nomination of the rooms themselves short-handing the inventory of items implied. This is the case when Margaret Stapledon leaves her daughter Johane Bowden "the hall house and two chambers over the said hall in which I now dwell in new Street in the burrough and town of Bideford" and "unto my daughter Agnes the kitchen the buttery and the chamber over being the residue of my dwelling house in new street aforesaid".[56] She also gives them "the herb garden in Cold Harbour belonging to my said dwelling house jointly". There is no reference to specific articles or objects within these rooms, but her division of her house into parcels for each daughter clearly articulates the locations in which she had lived and places her daughters into them in the future.

These rooms are not 'furnished' by Margaret but exist as unspecified collections of items which her daughters would have understood as belonging within them. Gartrude Morgan of Wells, however, uses her will to demonstrate how her house was divided and the objects which were to be found in specific rooms. For instance, she bequeaths "all the law books that are in my husbands study" to one Robert Cannington.[57] Books were a valuable commodity: in leaving them to Cannington, Gartrude was giving him something of significant worth, but,

[53] Margera de Grazia, Maureen Quilligan and Peter Stallybrass *Subject and Object in Renaissance Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p.5.
[54] De Grazia et al., p.5.
[55] De Grazia et al., p.1.
[56] TNA PROB11/256/112.
[57] TNA PROB11/273/444.

whilst there is no indication that he was a lawyer, the gift implies either current or future participation.[58] Nor is there mention of her husband's profession in her qualification, but this bequest indicates that he was a lawyer and had designated a specific part of the house as his study. In addition, she situates linen in a double trunk in her lodging chamber and sheets in a chest in the middle chamber, and the will itself has been "taken out of a trunk of the said Gartrud Morgan being in her lodging chamber". The implication is that her will had been written in advance, and was stored, amongst "other writings" in her bedroom. Gartrude thus creates a picture of her home in her will, through the location of particular items within it, and fashions an image of herself via the enumeration of the rooms and their contents. Her husband's death had not caused her to un-furnish the house; she had lived with the law books which had continued to represent him after his demise and had remained part of Gartrud's identity. The position of the books within a specific space within the house demonstrates their importance, but also the fact that Gartrude and her husband had sufficient room to accommodate them, and this is also implicit in the gift of Ellenor Woodward of "my best virginals" to her daughter-in-law.[59] The instrument would have commanded a significant amount of space, but also portrays Ellenor as a woman with education and leisure enough to play it, and accords the same accomplishment and time to her son's wife through her bequest. Such items thus serve to situate the testatrices within their domestic spaces by reference to the things which they contained and to illustrate their self-perceived status through their bequests.

Ellenor's gift to her daughter-in-law represents a tangible and audible referent of her. Other women left gifts which similarly offered tactile reminders of the testatrix. As was noted in chapter two, Dame Elizabeth Berkeley leaves "unto

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[58] For a discussion of the relative costs of books see James Raven, 'Markets and Martyrs: Early Modern Commerce' in *The Business of Books* ed. by James Raven (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), pp.46–82; David McKitterick "Ovid with a Littleton': The Cost of English Books in the Early Seventeenth Century' *Transactions of the Cambridge Bibliographical Society,* Vol.11, No. 2 (1997) 184-234.

[59] TNA PROB11/167/506; A virginal, or pair of virginals, was "a smaller type of harpsichord, usually with only one set of strings and jacks and invariably with only one keyboard" (*The Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (second edition) ed. by Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 2001), p.780). Surviving English virginals date from 1638-1684 and, whilst he outside of the rectangular boxes are plain, they are highly decorated on the inside, with landscape painting and gilt details (p.786). A woman playing the instrument is depicted in Gabriel Metsa's *Man and Woman seated by a Virginal* but the instruments often did not have legs, sitting on top of a table instead (Gabriel Metsa *Man and Woman seated by a Virginal*, Oil on oak, National Gallery, London, (c.1658) <https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/gabriel-metsu-a-man-and-a-woman-seated-by-a-virginal>).

my daughter Jane a needlework carpet which my mother gave me having the Killigrew arms thereupon"; she also gives "unto my daughter Margaret Berkeley a reed made carpet of my own making and all the needlework stools in my closet not yet finished".[60] In doing so, she recalls the making of the reed carpet, placing her in a scene of domestic production, and highlights the work that she has done so far on the needlework stools, demonstrating her pride in them. However, the fact that they are "not yet finished" implies an expectation that her daughter will complete the project, thus bringing the stools from the past where they were her undertaking, to a shared enterprise, in which they would both have contributed to the completion of the work, despite Elizabeth not being physically present at the end.

This self-conscious linking with the past and the drawing of lines between it, the present and the future, is also seen in bequests of pictures. Margaret Willis' gift to her brother of "my father his picture" implies not only enough money to be spent on such adornments, but also a desire to share with her brother the remembrance of her father and their mutual past. When Anne Fownes leaves her son "the twelve pictures in my great parlour and chamber", she presents these rooms as galleries and in keeping the pictures together as one bequest, she perhaps projects them into her son's house in the same format.[61] There is no indication of the subject of these pieces, but it is not inconceivable that they included portraits or scenes which evoked an association with the wider family, potentially from the past. The collection of the pictures and their placement in the "great parlour" allows Anne to create a scene which reinforces her perceived status and position. Lucretia Potte gives to her daughter, Sarah Grayle, a "picture which I have of the said Nathaniel Till-Addam".[62] In this case, she mediates a bond between aunt and nephew, the prop serving as a physical link between the three generations, albeit a non-linear link which kinks to a second branch of the family.

De Grazia et al., in their discussion of the links between objects and memory, note that such connections imply a reciprocity in which objects do not merely recall the subject, but function "as a surrogate whose very material stuff

[60] TNA PROB11/149/253.
[61] TNA PROB11/158/377.
[62] TNA PROB11/184/305. Nathaniel Till-Adam was the son of John Till-Adam, clerk, who was commissioned to preach funeral sermons for several Bristol women, as discussed in chapter two.

can remake the desire for that which it substitutes", imbuing bequests with the ability to memorialise the testatrix.[63] Assemblages of material goods served to furnish the women's homes and the giving of these items reassembled them in the home of the legatee. When given as rooms, they reflected and reproduced the testatrix's domestic settings, recalling her to those places, establishing the objects as prompts to remembrance. Leaving property in this way was a conscious choice and one which allowed the woman to recreate scenes from the life she was leaving, disassembling the sets in which she had lived in the past and reconstructing them in the future for someone else to inhabit.

Leaving substantial numbers of items from within one space amplified the memory of the testatrix by more comprehensively recreating the space in which she had existed and demonstrates that women were not restricted to the domestic setting of the home. When Mary Clapham leaves her son "all my chests boxes and shelves in my shop and all my weights balances and scales great and small", she not only identifies herself as a shop keeper, she also places herself within a physical setting which was furnished with these items.[64] The shelves held stock, implements, things connected to her trade and Mary moved about them, she held them and was physically situated in relation to them. In leaving them to her son, she passes him the trace of herself evoked by them.

Women who left livestock described themselves within particular pastoral or agricultural scenes. Temperance Pincombe of South Molton leaves "one sheep unto Samuel Tucker" and "one sheep" to Temperance Rashley and these singular gifts suggest that her sheep were intended to provide food for the household.[65] On the other hand, the gifts of Wilmoth Whittinstal of Minehead – "six sheep apiece" to two legatees, and "one sheep apiece" to two others – indicate a more extensive flock, possibly kept for wool production.[66] Catherine Stiffe of Inglestone Common, Gloucestershire, shares her livestock – "unto John Voules one cow I give unto John Webb one cow I give and bequeath unto Daniel Webb the younger one cow" and to her brother "the pigs in the sty" – enumerating

[63] de Grazia et al. p.9.
[64] TNA PROB11/250/526.
[65] TNA PROB11/174/336. Terry O'Connor 'Animals in urban life in Medieval to Early Modern England' *The Oxford Handbook of Zooarchaeology* ed. by Umberto Albarella, Mauro Rizzetto, Hannah Russ, Kim Vickers and Sarah Viner Daniels (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017), p.216.
[66] TNA PROB11/165/428.

her stock in giving it.[67] These cows are undifferentiated – there is no ostensible difference between them – and they are left as objects, but Alice Sharpe/Garrett distinguishes between those she passes on, leaving "one cow which is now at Portloo in Tristram Crouches custody", "one red cow" to the wife of one man, "one rugged cow to Henry Wemouth wife now being upon the commons of Westlow" and "one junior black cow now upon the common" to Dionice Fitzwilliams.[68] The number of cows, and the presence of the "junior" cow suggests that she kept them for milk and may have done so on a semi-commercial basis. Eleanor Idolls of Tresham, not far from Catherine Stiffe, gives to "my three Grandchildren John Longdon Julian Longdon & Richard Longdon my three oxen" along with the yokes and implements belonging to them and to her daughter all her "corn and grayne whatsoever I have now in my possession at ground" indicating that she had been involved in arable farming.[69] She also gives Richard Longdon her "Bay nagge", and stipulates a number of sheep to be divided between four other grandchildren, with three of them also receiving a yearling apiece. She then singles out, in a bequest to her only granddaughter Elizabeth, "my best cow named Vellett". In doing so, she indicates her attachment to the animal – it is the only one named – and to the legatee to whom it is left. This naming of the animal re-categorises it from 'livestock' to what Terry O'Connor describes as a 'companion' animal, suggesting a fondness for the cow which was perhaps shared by Elizabeth, thus linking her to her grandmother through it.[70]

The ownership of these animals reveals the participation of women in a particular area of production, on either a domestic or commercial footing. Certainly, the livestock left by Alice Godolphin confirms a substantial undertaking: "I give and bequeath unto my second son John Blanvill of Broadhinton in the county of Wilts esq … fifty bullock one hundred of ewe sheeps one hundred of weather sheep six of the best horses nags or mares I shall have at the time of my death".[71] As well as being of value, these animals placed the women within scenes where they tended them or supervised their husbandry and, in giving them to her beneficiaries, a woman not only passed on the livestock, but also the

[67] Gloucestershire, England, Wills and Inventories, 1541-1858 (*Ancestry.co.uk*) 1625/7.
[68] TNA PROB11/154/349.
[69] Gloucestershire, England, Wills and Inventories, 1541-1858 (*Ancestry.co.uk*) 221768.
[70] O'Connor, p.216.
[71] TNA PROB11/161/497.

memory of her engagement with it, and this was perhaps more poignant when the animals in question were named.

Funeral Scenes

At the end of *The Broken Heart,* Ford describes Ithocles' funeral scene:

> An alter, covered with white. Two lights of virgin wax. Music of recorders, during which enter four bearing Ithocles on a hearse, or in a chair, in a rich robe, and a crown on his head. [They] place him on one side of the alter. After him enter Calantha in a white robe and crowned; Euphrania, Philema, Chrystall in white; Nearchus, Armostes, Crotolon, Prophilus, Amelu, Bassanes, Lemophil, and Groneas. Calantha goes and kneels before the altar. The rest stand off, the women kneeling behind. Cease recorders during her devotions. Soft music. Calantha and the rest rise, doing obeisance to the altar.[72]

The white-covered altar establishes the set in which the action takes place; the "virgin wax" creates the atmospheric lighting. Ithocles is dressed according to his position, in a "rich robe" and a crown; Calantha in a white robe and crown. His mourners follow him according to their rank and association to the deceased, some in white garments which reflect their mourning. Having processed in, the mourners take up their positions, whilst Calantha performs her devotions.

This is a dramatic scene, but the elements are recognisable from the funerals of real people, and these were employed and manipulated by testatrices as part of their self-fashioning. The funeral was the final scene in which the testatrix, or at least her body, would appear. As chapter two illustrated, some women used their wills to commission an act of preaching at their funeral, but this was not the only arrangement which women directed through their wills. Before the Reformation, the "dying took considerable interest in their own funeral preparations and laid down, in considerable detail, directions to be followed by their executors" but, after the Reformation, the focus was, Sarah Tarlow asserts, on the destination of the soul, rather than the resting place of the body.[73] As a result, post-Reformation funerary stipulations "can be interpreted as a changing conception of the self and a heightened sense of individuality", albeit within "the

[72] John Ford, *'Tis Pity She's a Whore and other plays* ed. by Marion Lomax (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995) v.3 (stage directions).
[73] Clare Gittings, *Death, Burial and the individual in early modern England* (Beckenham: Croom Helm, 1984) p.86; Sarah Tarlow, *Ritual, Belief and the Dead in Early Modern Britain and Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), p.38.

customs and tensions of a complex society".[74] The demise of purgatory meant that rituals which had been designed to aid the soul of the departed were superfluous; logically, the funeral should have no spiritual function and should merely be a social act surrounding the disposal of the corpse.[75] Puritans saw no real need for the dead to be buried in a church or churchyard, although Protestant reformers deemed burial in consecrated ground a mark of respect; indeed, excessive ceremony or display could be seen as demonstrating a heretical adherence to superstitious popish practices.

This abjuration of ostentation is mandated by Prudence Tyson of Bristol who directs that her body be "decently interred near the corps of my deceased husband at the discretion of mine executors herein after named without pomp or needless expense".[76] Prudence instructs that her estate be dissolved and the proceeds split between her children and makes provision that the £200 left by her husband be paid according to his terms, suggesting that she had enough money to fund her funeral. Her eschewal of "needless expense" thus demonstrates her notion of decency; she trusts her executors to spend enough to ensure that she is properly buried, that her body is treated with due respect, but without any actions which could be associated with Catholicism. In doing so, she controls the scene of her burial just as much as if she had made specific requests for particular things; the absence of spectacle defines the action as much as its inclusion.

Prudence's will, proved in 1649, confirms the observation that, after 1644, the notion of a decent burial was prevalent.[77] This language matches that of the *Directory For the Publique Worship of God*, which stated that the body should be "decently attended from the house to the place appointed for publique Buriall and there immediately interred without any Ceremony".[78] The wording of the instruction conflates decency with a lack of ceremony, and the requirement for timely interment necessitated the foregoing of elaborate preparations and rituals, but within these instructions, there was room for interpretation. By removing the script which had been present in the *Book of Common Prayer,* the *Direction*

[74] Gittings, *Death, Burial,* p.14; David Cressy, *Birth, Marriage & Death: Ritual, Religion, and the life-cycle in Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p.379.
[75] Gittings, *Death, Burial* p.39; Clare Gittings 'Sacred and secular: 1558-1660' in *Death in England: An Illustrated History* ed. by Peter Jupp, and Clare Gittings, C. (eds.) (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), p.153.
[76] TNA PROB11/210/210.
[77] Gittings, *Death, Burial,* p.14.
[78] *A Directory For the Publique Worship of God* p.35.

created a textual void which could be filled by the testatrix or her overseers, executors or family.[79] This gap allowed testatrices to make personal requests, to construct for themselves an idea of "decently". Mary Polden for example, commits her "body to the grave to be decently buried in the church of St Mary of Redcliff in the said city of Bristol", leaving it to the discretion of her executor to determine what 'decently' might look like, but clearly linking the idea with burial within the church.[80] Elizabeth Paige requests that her "funeral may be solemnized in such a way as may answer my age rank and degree but without expecting any blacks of mourning of any kind or sort from my beloved and only brother Thomas Horwood".[81] For her, due respect to her "age rank and degree" does not include mourning blacks, and her will explicitly excuses her brother from wearing them and therefore from the expense he would incur in doing so, despite the fact that she leaves property of considerable value and could have provided money for mourning clothes.

Likewise, Margaret Beile asks that she be buried in a "decent manner according to my rank and quality", but this time at the charge of her executor, leaving to him the determination of her "rank and quality" and the commensurate cost of demonstrating it, whilst Isabel Morry instructs her son-in-law and his wife to see her buried according to her degree and calling.[82] This desire that the burial and attendant ceremony should adequately reflect the status of the testatrix is also evident in Susanna Southcott's desire to be "buried in decent manner in Shillingford church by or with my husband John Southcott by daie and not by night".[83] Night-time burial – a possible reaction against the strictures of the College of Arms – became fashionable amongst the middling sort during the reign of James I.[84] Nocturnal ceremonies could be arranged more quickly, avoided the need for embalming and allowed for manipulation of the tradition of having mourners of the same gender, thus allowing husbands to act as chief mourners for their wives and *vice versa.*[85] However, there was an implied secrecy to burial in the dark, and, given the tenor of the remainder of Susanna's will, her stipulation

[79] See Cummings (op. cit.) for the text of the different iterations of the *Book of Common Prayer.*
[80] TNA PROB11/148/423.
[81] TNA PROB11/266/167.
[82] TNA PROB11/200/395; Gloucestershire, England, Wills and Inventories, 1541-1858 (*Ancestry.co.uk* 224659).
[83] TNA PROB11/159/560.
[84] Gittings, *Death, Burial* p.93.
[85] Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion* pp.272-3.

is designed to have her funeral made visible and celebrated, rather than being hidden.[86] Sara Pitt of Bristol requests burial within the crowd of St. Nicholas church at the discretion of her executor, but sets her own value by allocating a generous "sum of one hundred and fifty pounds for my funeral expenses".[87]

These women did not leave elaborate instructions, but there was an implicit expectation with regard to their funerals and an anticipation that their executors or children would understand the testatrices' wishes and would be obliged to fulfil them. In addition, there was, perhaps, a degree of modesty, as women sought to devolve responsibility for the determination of their rank and degree to others. As with instructions for funeral sermons, there was no guarantee that their requests for specific places of burial would be fulfilled, but that they made these requests demonstrates women's desires to see themselves situated in particular places and to create specific scenes in which to appear and called on their proxies to ensure that their wishes were observed. In claiming for themselves – albeit obliquely – a particular rank, quality or calling, the testatrix was using her instructions for burial as part of her self-fashioning.

Whilst the testatrix, or at least her mortal body, was the star of this final scene, she would not be alone in it, and wills were used to deploy people in order to populate the woman's funeral tableaux. Andrea Brady notes that "a death in the household temporarily set a family apart", and the funeral of that person served as a mechanism for the reintegration of the family into society and as a way of reaffirming social bonds.[88] Participants in the funeral scene constituted a ritual family, a group of people who created an extended 'family' who accompanied the deceased to her grave and, for some women, the will represented the opportunity to engage and direct this congregation.[89] In giving bequests "unto the four men that shall carry me to my grave" or to the "good friends that shall accompany me to my grave", women such as Anne Averie and Susan Cole direct the procession in which they would take part.[90] Mary Collier

[86] As we will see, Susanna's will suggests that the relationship between her and her brother-in-law was a difficult one.
[87] TNA PROB11/182/86.
[88] Andrea Brady, ''A share of sorrows': Death in the Early Modern English Household' in *Emotions in the Household, 1200–1900* ed. by Susan Broomhall (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), pp.185-202 (p.185).
[89] For a discussion of this idea, see Sharon Stocchia, *Death and Ritual in Renaissance Florence* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992).
[90] Bristol Archive FCW1645/1; TNA PROB11/211/287

increases this cast, awarding “twelve pence apiece” to “my four bearers to church” and to “my two syde women that shall accompany my corpse to the grave”.[91] The men who dug these graves were also sometimes rewarded: Elizabeth Colston, for instance, leaves money to pay for the “breaking up of the ground in the crowde of St Johns parish where I desire to lie”, thus once again not only situating herself physically in that space, but also projecting the scene of the ground breaking itself.[92] These people are unnamed, categorised by the role they would play in the scene, rather than their relationship to the testatrix, but Em Symons appoints money “unto the Bearers which shall carry my corpse unto my grave thirty shillings in money for them to dine together”, indicating a previous link between them and a desire that they congregate in her name.[93]

FROM TITLE PAGE OF "LONDONS LAMENTATION," 1641.

Figure 12. Title page *Londons Lamentation.*[94]

Bequests to bearers, grave-diggers and attendants serve to create scenes such as the one depicted on the title page of *Londons Lamentation* (figure 12). This

[91] TNA PROB11/201/602. See Cressy, *Birth, Marriage,* pp.421-456.
[92] TNA PROB11/163/331; "crowd, n.2." *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018) <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/45033> [Accessed 11 June 2018]).
[93] TNA PROB11/242/212. Bearers would sometimes be members of the family, but the provision of payment suggests that in these cases they are poor people employed for the task (Gittings ‘Sacred and Secular’ p.157).
[94] *Londons lamenataion, or, A fit admonishment for city and country…* (London: Printed by E.P. for Iohn Wright Junior, 1641) <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Plague_scene;_woodcut_Wellcome_M0010437.jpg> [Accessed 28 August 2018]. See Julian Litten, *The English Way of Death: The Common Funeral Since 1450* (London: Robert Hale, 1991), p.159 for a discussion of the woodcut.

depicts the differences between the burial of plague victims in the country and those in London, between the unceremonious throwing of bodies into a plague-pit and the coffining and careful carrying of the corpse (albeit without the attendance of a priest) to a freshly dug grave. It is this sort of scene, including the accompanying of the corpse, which testatrices such as Anne, Susan, Em, Mary and Elizabeth sought to construct. The presence of these extras was part of these testatrices' construction of a decent burial through which they sought to define themselves.

Gifts to "the poor" to be given at the funeral placed such people in the scene, too. These bequests frequently follow the same pattern: Ellenor Woodward of Bristol wills that "five pounds be distributed the day of my funeral amongst the poor people of the parish of St Thomas"; Prudence Vennan leaves "ten shillings to be distributed amongst [the poor] on the day of my burial" and Julian Stibbins allocates "three pounds in money to be distributed amongst poor people on the day of my funeral".[95] However, other women left their charity in the form of bread. Elizabeth Welsteed, for instance, allows "forty shillings to be distributed in bread amongst poor people on the day of my funeral", whilst Elizabeth Godwin provides that "twenty shillings of lawful money of England shalbe distributed in bread to poor people the day of my funeral".[96] Bread was a practical gift of sustenance, but its association with Christ's last supper and the enduring representation of his body in the Eucharist imbued it with additional significance.

In placing these poor people at the funeral and casting them as spectators of the burial, testatrices provided an audience who could attest to the 'decent' burial of her body. In other cases, the focus was moved away from the church or churchyard, extending the scene of their burial into other places as is the case with Em Symons of Bristol who instructs that her gifts to the poor be given "at the door of my dwelling house immediately after my funeral," linking the dead body which had just been buried to the memory of the living one which had inhabited the home.[97] Separate provision was made by some women for those who were unable to attend the funeral. Agnes Archard, for example, appoints "unto the poor of Thornbury Morton and Hinton ten shillings to be distributed unto such poor

[95] TNA PROB11/167/506; Bristol Archive FCW1635/4/20; PROB11/220/702.
[96] TNA PROB11/270/13; PROB11/166/426.
[97] TNA PROB11/242/121.

people as shall not be able to come unto my funeral", which not only ensured that a wider range of people were remembered, but also suggests that there would have been other, unspecified, charity for those who were present.[98] These gifts demonstrate the testatrix's charitable duty and, the presence of "the poor" provided proof of her beneficence. As such, she used her will as a formalised vehicle for ensuring their attendance, directing their actions and enacting her generosity for the assembled congregation to witness.

Alongside family and friends, these poor people populated women's wills and created funeral tableaux with the testatrix at the heart. They filled the church, surrounded the grave, talked to one another about the woman, sharing reminiscences and situating her as the subject of the ceremony. Their presence bore witness to the quality of her burial, fulfilled her desire to see her beneficence recognised and reinforced her social standing. The scene was sometimes enhanced by the costuming of both the principal actors and the extras in mourning clothes or 'blacks'. As a valuable commodity, gifts of clothing represented a practical covering for the body, but could also demonstrate "identity and status, income and occupation, modesty or display and could be used as a vehicle for self-expression and self-promotion".[99] As Tarlow observes,

> [t]he use of black was a way of making visible the particular status of the bereaved, and could be a dramatic manifestation of an emotional state. The deep cultural association in the west between darkness and desolation gives the use of 'mourning' material evocative force.[100]

Mourning dress was therefore important as a means of demonstrating both respect for the deceased and the personal sense of loss occasioned by their death.[101] In leaving mourning, the testatrix converted the bodies which wore it into visual symbols of her worth. No longer able to adorn her own body as part of her self-fashioning, she clothed other bodies instead, using the blacks as an overt indication of others' esteem and affection for her.[102] The wider the gifts were spread, the broader the network of love and respect claimed. However, there is also a sense in which the provision of mourning clothes encoded an obligation on the part of the mourners. In receiving gifts of blacks, people were being cast

[98] Bristol Archives FCW1641/1/18.
[99] James, p.267. These ideas will be explored in further detail below.
[100] Tarlow, p 186. See also Brady, pp.185-202.
[101] Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion,* p. 248.
[102] Gifts of women's own clothes as for memorialisation will be discussed below.

as mourners and there was an assumption of grief on behalf of the recipient and of the desire to demonstrate and share that in the semi-public forum of the funeral.

Sometimes, such gifts were limited to immediate family, designed to signify a hierarchy of mourners and create an 'us' to which the deceased woman belonged. Mary Ricroft, for example, leaves "five pounds a piece to be bestowed in mourning apparel at my funeral" to her son, Nicholas and "my first daughter".[103] Her bequest to one of her daughters, at the exclusion of the others, casts this "first daughter" as chief mourner and demarcates her as such through the costume she is assigned.[104] Likewise, Joice Charlton's gift to her son and daughter-in-law of "ten pounds for mourning apparel at my funeral", casts them as chief mourners, despite the fact that it is her daughter who is appointed executrix of the will.[105] Other women left blacks to their siblings, thus associating themselves more closely with their birth family. This is the case with Marie Pitt, who provides mourning gowns for her two sisters and a cloak for her brother, and Elizabeth Russell of Gloucester who bequeaths "unto my two brothers Edward Nourse and Luke Nourse three pounds apiece to buy them blacks", but not to her daughter, son-in-law or grandchildren.[106] Where a sibling had pre-deceased the testatrix, a gift of mourning to be worn in their stead served to fill the gap left by the absent brother or sister. Thus, when Joane Trosse, a spinster of Exeter, gives a gown to the daughter of her dead brother as well as to her living brothers and sister, she appoints her niece to represent her father, reconstructing and reuniting the Trosse family for her funeral.

Gifts of mourning were also used to extend the circle of grievers by including not only family, but also other members of the household such as servants. Joane Trosse's mother, Elizabeth, provides mourning clothes for "all my servants", whilst Mary Butcher leaves "unto such maid servants as shalbe dwelling with me at the time of my decease forty shillings a piece and each of them a mourning gown", with a separate bequest that a named servant "Ralph Haynes [be given] the sum of forty shillings and I will that he shall have a

[103] TNA PROB11/201/411.
[104] Houlbrooke notes that the rise in private funerals allowed husbands to mourn for wives and vice versa, rather than mourners being of the same gender as the deceased, allowing the expression of personal grief (Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion,* p.273).
[105] TNA PROB11/215/739.
[106] TNA PROB11/166/554; PROB11/ 276/285.

mourning suit and cloak".[107] In leaving these gifts of clothing, Elizabeth and Mary demonstrate their benevolence towards their servants by giving them things of value, but the bequests also imply a presumption of dutiful mourning. Apart from that to Ralph Haynes, which is personal, these gifts mark the relationship between the testatrix and recipient – that between mistress and servant. This wider provision of mourning to the household meant an extensively costumed funeral. That of Elizabeth Southcott of Exeter was to be attended by a whole cast of appropriately dressed mourners: she leaves "unto my menservants and women servants mourning cloaths that is to saie to my menservants that shalbe with mee at the tyme of my death mourning clokes and to my women servants mourning gownes to bee provided by my said executor" and also expects her children to wear mourning provided "at their owne coste".[108] These gifts marked servants and family out as part of the testatrix's immediate social circle, associating them not only with the woman herself, but also with one another, united in mourning by the costumes which they wore.

If gifts of mourning to the household recalled the woman's domestic role, then bequests of blacks to 'the poor' were designed to demonstrate and reinforce her role as benefactrix, and once again creates a cast of testatrix-determined deserving poor. Elizabeth Batten specifies twenty pounds "to be distributed in mourning gloves and handkerchiefs for poor people at my funeral"; more generously, Elizabeth Russell gives "to six poor widdows each one of them a mourning gown".[109] Sarah Browne's gifts are more explicitly entailed; she allows "unto four and twenty poor women mourning gowns of good cloth to be present make and to wear the said gowns at my funeral by the discretion of my executor and overseers".[110] There is no personal relationship recorded between Sarah and these women who were, once again, appointed by proxy and, whilst there is a charitable aspect to the gift (and that of food at her funeral which follows it), the specification that they should wear the gowns at her interment indicates that she, like the Elizabeths, saw the funeral as a performance at which the suitably attired poor would play a particular part.

Gifts of blacks created a cast of mourners for a woman's funeral, but they were not necessarily an homogenous group and the quality of the mourning given

[107] TNA PROB11/163/567; PROB11/242/11.
[108] TNA PROB11/156/498.
[109] TNA PROB11/180/115. PROB11/ 276/285.
[110] Gloucestershire, England, Wills and Inventories, 1541-1858 (*Ancestry.co.uk*) 224241.

could serve to mark and maintain social standing, creating a hierarchy of mourners. Thomasin Harrington, for example, differentiates between her mourners through the quality of the garments provided for them:

> I will and give and appoint thirty pounds to be bestowed in forty black furze gowns and as many kerchiefs for forty poor women to attend in and mourn at my funeral … I give unto my sister Baldwyn eight pounds to make her mourning apparel And to my sister Turner other eight pounds to make her mourning apparel And to my sister Atweeok five pounds to make her mourning apparel And to each of them the said Margaret Harry and Margaret five pounds a piece to make them mourning apparel and to William Owen three pounds to make him a mourning cloak … to Jane my servant three pounds to make her mourning apparel…And to Mary my servant three pounds to make her mourning apparel … And I give to the said master Pritchard five pounds further to make him a mourning gown.[111]

The amount to be spent on each item serves to create and reinforce the social order, and the sheer number of women appointed to mourn her creates an impressive tableau at her funeral. However, it was not only women who were designated as mourners, and Thomasin uses her will to direct men, clothing William Owen in a mourning cloak and expecting his participation in her final scene. These mourning clothes would endure and serve to re-memorialise Thomasin each time they were worn, something which Ellenor Woodward appreciated when she gave a mourning gown to the priest appointed to deliver her funeral sermon.[112] Not only would he be appropriately dressed for her funeral – at her expense – but the gift would ensure that Ellenor and her religious adherence would be recalled each time he wore it. [113]

Blanch Squibb's categorisation of her mourners through the provision of mourning is more explicit yet:

> I give unto my son Robert Squibb and to my nephew Henry Grenfeild to each of them a mourning cloak of good broadcloth to be bought at the cost and charges of my executor Item I give to my sister Joane Castle and my four nieces (to wit) to Joane Grenfeild Elizabeth Osgood Anne Burges and Frances Squibb to each of them a mourning gown of some good black stuff to be bought at the cost and charges of my executor Item I give and bequeath unto my kinswoman Bersheba Grenfeild the wife of Henry Grenfeild aforesaid one mourning gown of good black stuff to be bought at the costs and charges of my executor Item I give unto Honour Osmond the wife of Richard Osmond of Truro twenty shillings and a black gown of some course stuff to be bought at the costs and

[111] TNA PROB11/236/427.
[112] TNA PROB11/167/506.
[113] The policies of the 1630s stated that the *Book of Common Prayer* should be used, without omission or addition by preachers dressed in the stipulated vestments (Tom Webster, 'Early Stuart Protestantism' in *The Cambridge Companion to Puritanism* ed. by John Coffey and Paul C.H. Lim (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008), pp.48-66 (p. 56)).

> charges of my executor Item I give unto Constance Hambly of Truro spinster one black gown of some course stuff to be bought at the costs and charges of my executor.[114]

Blanch is described as a sempster, and her bequests, as well as recording her relationship to the people to whom she leaves mourning garments through the quality of the fabric to be used for them, confirms her engagement with the cloth trade.[115] These were new clothes, made from fabrics of different grades, but some women, such as Elizabeth Cox(e), repurpose garments to provide blacks. She ends her will:

> I give to my servant John a mourning cloak and my son John Meredith black cloak at Dyram to make him a suit of cloaths Also I give and bequeath to my maidservant Thomazin Chandler thirty shillings to make her a mourning gown.[116]

Elizabeth's gift of her son's cloak as the fabric for a suit for her servant, repeated at her death the practice of recycling the family's clothes to make articles for the poor which she may have undertaken in life. She assumes control of the property, refashioning it to provide mourning, and, in the process, associates her servant with her son materially.

This linking of people via specific articles of clothing was amplified where women gave their own clothes as mourning. In leaving her "best suite of mourning apparel to her daughter-in-law", Elizabeth Cotton provides her relative with the means of demonstrating her grief, and links it with her own mourning for whomever she had worn it.[117] Similarly, Mary Hort's gift to her cousin of her "black mohair silk gown and my best mohair petticoat to wear at my funeral for mourning" creates a tangible material link between the two women.[118] Mary also provides money to have a mourning gown made for another cousin, and "the sum of five pounds of good and lawful money" to her "old servant Blanch Bury" to "be paid her presently after my decease by my executors to make her a mourning gown". That these two sums were identical positioned the women equally within Mary's affections, but the transfer of clothes for mourning from her own body to that of the other woman intensified the potency of the gift to her cousin.

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[114] TNA PROB11/251/370.
[115] For a discussion of the currency of clothing see Peter Stallybrass 'Worn Worlds: Clothes and Identity on the Renaissance Stage' in Margera de Grazia, Maureen Quilligan and Peter Stallybrass (eds.) *Subject and Object in Renaissance Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp.289-320.
[116] TNA PROB11/251/731.
[117] TNA PROB11/177/112.
[118] TNA PROB11/295/660.

Mourners, appointed and suitably dressed, formed the audience for a testatrix's final scene. The provision of money, bread and clothes served to reward the congregation for their fealty and love, but it also ensured their presence, as did the provision of food and drink at or after the burial.[119] Most women made no reference to a feast, but there were some who created an extension to their funeral scene, providing money for a post-funeral meal. Whilst Susan Cole of Barnstaple "ordain[s] that four pounds be expended in my funeral dinner", other women were more precise about who should attend the gathering.[120] Mary Hort of Bristol bestows three pounds to the company of haberdashers "to provide a dinner on the day of my funeral", and Ann Price stipulates "three pounds to be spent upon a dinner upon them [her overseers] and my said executor and such friends as they shall think good at or about the time of my burial".[121] Again, these were scenes which would not feature the physical presence of the testatrix, but would be held in her name and in her memory.

Using their wills, testatrices appointed and clothed mourners, directed their own funeral scenes and appointed extended groups of people to mark their passing. In doing so, they created an image of themselves as benevolent mistresses and much-missed family members and defined what 'decent' looked like. They may not have had control over the time of their death, but they could use their wills to fashion their final scenes.

Sites of Burial

In the majority of cases, these funeral scenes, no matter how carefully and elaborately choreographed and costumed, were transitory, enduring only in the wills which contained the arrangements. Even where women requested burial in a particular church or churchyard, these places were rarely marked.[122] However, for some women, the will offered the opportunity to direct more permanent forms of memorialisation in the shape of tombs and grave stones. Although the Reformation saw a backlash against the iconography and ceremony of

[119] Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion,* p.255.
[120] TNA PROB11/211/287.
[121] TNA PROB11/295/660; PROB11/200/613.
[122] As Gittings points out, very few graves had tombstones before the late seventeenth century (Gittings, *Death, Burial* p.143).

Catholicism, Protestants sought to ensure that their own visual culture was "potent" and that it "assimilated the great positive power of the ancient beliefs".[123] Peter Sherlock argues that monuments "offer a means for assessing how reform was actually practiced", asserting that the fact that monuments were the province of the elite – the class "entrusted with enforcing reform" – means that they provide evidence of the changes that were enacted over the course of the Reformation.[124] Given that memorials were erected to the memory of the dead, the change in the doctrine surrounding death is readable through these post-Reformation memorials as, with the abolition of prayers for the dead, the use of effigies at prayer and the requests for intercession made by the installations on behalf of the deceased were abandoned.[125] Instead, post-Reformation monuments replaced textual and visual prompts for prayer with alternative opportunities for "new forms of memory".[126] They associated their subject with their actions in life, thus countering "the anonymity of death" and maintained social differentiation, offering an idealised and romanticised version of the deceased.[127] Precisely because monuments were the preserve of the elite, they ensured the maintenance of class boundaries, allowing those in a position of power to exert their influence beyond death and, in doing so, encouraging the dissemination of their religious beliefs. In addition, these installations allowed the influential to ensure the continuity of their family from generation to generation, preserving family bonds across the years and allowing no gap between the dead and their heir, so that the social fabric was not rent.[128] As such, the presence of the deceased, alongside the living successors, allowed onlookers to be reassured about future stability and offered a form of resistance to the fragmentation of the family caused by death.[129]

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[123] Nigel Llewellyn, *Funeral Monuments in Post-Reformation England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) p.35.
[124] Peter Sherlock, *Monuments and Memory in Early Modern England* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2008) p.98.
[125] Sherlock, *Monuments and Memory,* p.98; Sherlock asserts that the evidence of monuments during the 1560s demonstrate that "reformers won the battle to abolish the long established practice of praying for the dead amongst those wealthy enough to have tombs" (*Monuments and Memory,* pp.107-8).
[126] Sherlock, *Monuments and Memory,* p.125.
[127] Llewellyn, p.37.
[128] Gittings notes that funeral practices served to maintain social stability through public displays of grandeur (Gittings, *Death, Burial,* p.89). Monuments, as part of these funeral practices can be seen as a part of this.
[129] Llewellyn, p.42, 50.

As chapter four will demonstrate, it was not only men who built or were commemorated with tombs, grave markers or memorials and, where these were commissioned by women, they likewise served to maintain social bonds and to act as *memento mori.* When Ann Doddington asks that she be "buried in the church of Kenn in the county of Somerset … near the body of my dear Lady and Mistress the Lady Stallendge", at the discretion of her overseer, she does not explicitly request any kind of grave marker, but the implication behind the "discretion" with which she charges her overseer is that one would be provided, as evidence that they had fulfilled her wishes.[130] The presence of the stone which was installed in the church of St. John the Evangelist represents the transformation of the emotional bond between Ann and Lady Stalling in life into a physical one, cementing it in perpetuity through their closeness in death. Its position in the church meant that it was evident to the public, but it also meant that the duty of Ann's overseer was marked, thus silently speaking to the relationship between them as well. As Ann did not stipulate any wording for the stone, the relatively straightforward rehearsal of Ann's name and date of burial, engraved within an arch supported by Doric columns and surmounted by an hour glass flanked by Tudor roses, was presumably determined by her overseer on her behalf.

Figure 13. The tomb of Ann Doddington.[131]

[130] TNA PROB11/198/256.

[131] Sue Hoddinott 'Anne Doddington' *Find A Grave* <https://www.findagrave.com/cgi-bin/fg.cgi?page=gr&GSln=doddington&GSfn=ann&GSbyrel=all&GSdyrel=all&GScntry=5&GSob=n&GRid=166336557&df=all&> [Accessed 28 August 2018]. The church itself was rebuilt in

Ann's request for permanent memorialisation was oblique, relying on the intervention of her overseers, but other women made direct appeals for lasting memorials. Unlike Ann, Joane Johns of Bristol instructs her overseers to provide the text for her monument, requiring that she be

> entered in Christian burial with conveniency after my decease as near as may be unto my late husband John Martin in the churchyard of the parish of St Thomas within the said city and the stones there at the head and foot to be now finished and engraven at the discretion of my overseers.[132]

In this case, the stones already exist – they are "there" – and she may well have already provided or overseen the text which celebrates her husband. Between his death and her own, the half-finished stones had symbolised the inevitability of death and have also represented in physical form the rupture in their relationship. With Joane's death, the couple are reunited, and this is to be marked by the finished monument to them both. Her instruction in her will thus draws attention to the fact that she had begun the process of commemoration of her husband, as well as stating her own desire to be remembered in perpetuity; the position of the stones within the churchyard indicates her intention that their memorial be visible and available as a *memento mori* as well as a personal monument. Mary Hort similarly requests burial in St. Thomas' churchyard, Bristol, again as near as possible to her husband, and she too asks for a grave marker.[133] She has not started the process but desires "to have a large tombe stone sit on both our graves with our portraits upon both the side stones thereof hand in hand", and she leaves one hundred pounds for the same. The significant expenditure matches the size of the monument envisaged and she also dictates its shape, with its two side stones. Mary and her husband are to be represented visually, making clear their relationship in life, and, eternally, in death. She does not specify any written text; the image of the couple and their enduring unity will serve to memorialise them, and to encourage people to meditate upon their own life and death.

1862. Monuments to the Stalling family can still be seen in the church. There are variant spellings of the name. I am indebted to John Ball, churchwarden of St. John the Evangelist, Kenn, for his help with this.

[132] TNA PROB11/292/263.

[133] TNA PROB11/295/560.

In marking the site of their burial in the churchyard, these women established themselves as a constant reminder of the inevitability of death to the congregation and as part of the scene of future funerals, giving them a non-speaking role in the ceremonies. There may no longer have been any need for intercessory prayers, but the presence of a stone called to mind the deceased whose grave it marked, including them in the thoughts of the bereaved, and women's requests for a memorial in their wills suggests a deliberate attempt on their part to continue their memory through a physical installation.[134]

The majority of testatrices asked to be interred in a churchyard and burial within the actual church was reserved for people of a particular social standing.[135] This right is claimed by Dorothy Bateman but, in order to ensure that her wishes are respected, she provides "towards the reparations of the church of St Johns in the said borough twenty shillings conditionally that my body be laid in St Johns church aforesaid in the middle ally near my seat."[136] In her commendation, she asks that her body be committed "to the earth from whence it came nothing doubting the resurrection thereof at the later daye and to be buried in seemly and christianlike manner by the direction and discretion of mine executor and overseers", and her later specification of a position within the church countermands the discretion of these appointees. In offering, contingently, money for the privilege, Dorothy places the church under an obligation, effectively buying her position within the building and maintaining the status she had enjoyed in life.

In the main, however, women's right to burial within the church was claimed in relation to the status of their husbands. Thus, Elizabeth Hussey asks to be buried in the "chancel of the parish church of Okehampton beforesaid as near unto my late husband as conveniently I may", reiterating their standing and, when Elizabeth Jurdain requests that she be "buryed in the parrish church of Saint Mary Arches in Exon in the grave of my late deceased husband", she invokes his status as a former mayor of Exeter, and situates herself with him.[137]

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[134] Further consideration of the provision of monuments will be undertaken in Chapter four, but on the subject see: Nigel Llewellyn, *Funeral Monuments in Post-Reformation England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000); Peter Sherlock, *Monuments and Memory in Early Modern England* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2008).
[135] Gittings, *Death, Burial* p.143.
[136] TNA PROB11/169/10.
[137] TNA PROB11/244/230; PROB11/211/638. There is no record of the Jurdains' burial site within St. Mary Arches church (Beatrice Cresswell, *Exeter Churches: Notes on the History Fabrics and Features of Interest in the Churches of the Deanery of Christianity Devon* (Exeter: James G. Commin, 1908), pp.91-110. Elizabeth's husband, Ignatius, was a freeman of the city

Similarly, Jane Robarts claims the right to be buried "in the same tomb where my deceased husband Thomas Robarts was buryed or otherwise so near him as may be".[138] When Elizabeth Southcott requests that she be laid "within the chancel of the parish church of Shillingford St George in the countie of Devon in the vault grave there where my deare and welbeloved husband was interred", she both demonstrates her affection for her husband and asserts her right, through his status, to be buried within the church.[139] There is a confidence in her claim, an expectation that she has the right to demand it, but this was not the case for all women. Elizabeth's daughter-in-law, Susanna, who also requests burial within the church, is not so confident that her request will be acceded to:

> I give and bequeath my body to the earth to bee buried in decent manner in Shillingford church by or with my husband John Southcott by daie and not by night which being due to mee I hope my religious and Christian friends and Brother George Southcott the patron will not withstand for the vault is fitted capable of mee as my late husband was interred therein so I doe challenge the same.[140]

Susanna claims her right to be buried with her husband but lacks assurance that she will be so. In an attempt to forestall any objection, she notes the fact that the vault is big enough for her, but she also seeks to employ others in her cause. She situates her brother-in-law alongside her "religious and Christian friends", placing the onus on external agents to ensure that Southcott consents to her wish, appealing to their godliness and the obligation that this placed them under. The idea of "challenge", with its connotations of accusation, reproval and reprehension, implies that she is not convinced that, without their oversight, her "Brother" would comply with her will. [141] In death, she was reliant on the intercession of others to ensure that her brother-in-law permitted her to be buried within the church and be remembered alongside her husband.

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of Exeter, mayor and MP. He was a contentious figure who did "more than any other individual of his generation to influence the course of public affairs in that city" (Stoyle, Mark. "Jurdain, Ignatius (bap. 1561, d. 1640), politician and civic reformer," *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* online edn, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) [Accessed Jun. 2018]). http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-15140). As Cresswell observes, several of Exeter's mayors were buried within the church.

[138] TNA PROB11/183/260.

[139] TNA PROB11/156/498.

[140] TNA PROB11/159/560.

[141] "challenge, v." *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018) <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/30299> [Accessed 26 June 2018].

Susanna's desire to be memorialised within the building via her husband is implicit, but some women used their wills to explicitly request their resting place within the church be marked. Mary Bartlett of Stow-on-the-Wold, for example, asks to be buried by her husband but also requests a memorial to them both. Her desire is that

> such a font [be] laid over us both as lieth over Thomas Conway Knight at Sylthrop, for the performance of the font fifty pounds I leave with my executor twenty pounds whereof I give them for their pains and the rest being thirty pounds to be bestowed upon the font aforesaid and my funeral.[142]

Being buried with her husband would re-establish the bond between them, and the font would serve to memorialise the two of them. The symbolism of the font which is associated with the beginning of life and the grave which marks the end also allowed their resting place to serve as a *memento mori*. Baptism was ubiquitous; in bringing a child to be baptised, a congregation would be faced with a reminder of death, thus ensuring that the two things were closely associated. However, there may have been another dynamic to Mary's request: in seeking to replicate the monument of Sir Thomas Conway, she positions herself and her husband with him, aligning them and assimilating his status through that association.

After the Reformation, monuments offered no ostensible influence on the prospect of salvation, yet commissions for them still appeared in wills. Although relatively few women made such requests, the examples given here demonstrate that where they did occur, they can be read as part of a woman's self-fashioning. Burial with a husband or other family member reunited them and allowed the woman to demonstrate her lasting fealty whilst the establishment of an artefact of permanent remembrance both reflected and created a woman's status as worthy of commemoration. In idealised form, the testatrix continued to exert her example and influence beyond her death.

Quasi-funeral Scenes

The funeral scene was one in which the testatrix could picture herself and her own social and religious commitments and her experience of the ritual informed her understanding and her desires for her own burial. In addition, it was a scene that she could feel confident of having some influence over. Its proximity to her

[142] TNA PROB11/155/113.

death, the necessity of her body being promptly disposed of and the function that it performed within society meant that her funeral was an assured future event. Her gifts of money, food and mourning might serve to dress and populate the set, but they merely enhanced or decorated a scene which, in some form, was inevitable.

However, testatrices also used their wills to direct more peripatetic scenes of memorialisation, which were allied to the funeral. Ann Doddington, for example, leaves bequests to the poor of four parishes, to be distributed at different times – on the day of her burial, "the next Sabbath day after my funeral", "the next week after my burial" and "the week after my death" – recreating, in part, her funeral scene.[143] Without recourse to Catholic month's minds and trentals, Ann found an alternative way of being remembered and created congregations of people in her name in four separate places on four distinct occasions.[144] In a similar vein, Alice Knight ordains "fifty two shillings to be distributed in bread that is to say twelve pounds on every Sunday for the space of one whole year after my decease", thus extending and repeating her 'funeral' as an act of remembrance.[145] This re-enactment and repetition is also mandated by Thomasin Harrington who gives the profit of fifty-two pounds and ten shillings

> upon trust and confidence that there shalbe out of the yearly profits … found and provided ready every Lords day in every week forever at morning service in the parish church of St Nicholas in the said city of Bristol or the suburbs thereof one week six two penny loaves of holsom bread for mans body and another week seven two penny loaves of like bread And so by turns weekly forever to be distributed to the poor of the said parish by the discretion of the overseers of the poor of the same parish for the time being forever.[146]

In directing that bread be given "in remembrance of me", Thomasin is not only feeding the living body, but also evoking the words of Luke 22:19 and the Eucharist service in the *Book of Common Prayer* which asks that the bread be eaten "in remembrance that Christ died for thee", thus associating her own

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[143] TNA PROB11/198/256.
[144] Minds, at the interval of a month or a year were designed to formally remember the dead ("mind, n.1." *Oxford English Dictionary Online* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018) <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/118732> [Accessed 28 July 2018]). Trentals were a set of thirty requiem masses and the payment made for the same ("trental, n." *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018) <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/205559> [Accessed 28 July 2018]).
[145] TNA PROB11/213/738.
[146] TNA PROB11/236/427.

memory with that of the Last Supper in a scene which was to be re-staged across a year.[147]

Both Alice and Thomasin's charity was linked to Sunday and the weekly celebration of the Eucharist, but this was not the only holy day which women employed in their quest for memorialisation. Cicilie Gunning associates herself with Christmas and Good Friday, providing

> ten shillings a piece to the six poorest widows for the time being (vizt) the halt the lame the blind the sick and such other as be most comfortless and not about to labour within the parish of St Stephens by the discretion of my overseers and church wardens for the time being which said ten shillings apiece my will is it be paid and delivered severally unto every of the said six poor widows on Christmas day in every year And also my will is that on every good Friday in every year there be likewise paid and delivered severally unto every one of the such said six poor widows out of the said interest and proceeds of the said stock of money three shillings and four pence apiece to buy every one of them a smock apiece.[148]

Her wording echoes John 5:3 – "In these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for the moving of the water" – except that in Cicile's bequest it is specifically women who are chosen to receive help.[149] In selecting these days, Cicile links herself with Christ's birth and death, aligning the memory of her, through her charity, to Christ. Her gift of clothing would dress the women in her memory, marking them publicly as recipients of her charity, allowing acknowledgement of her beneficence and rendering her memorialisation public and evident.

New Year's Day was another date which was chosen by women for self-commemoration. Elizabeth Colston leaves money "to provide and procure a sermon to be preached in the said church of St Johns every first day of January commonly called new years day for ever".[150] Likewise, Ellenor Woodward provides funds for the annual New Year's Day sermon which her husband had requested in his will, with ten shillings for the preacher, and ten shillings to be distributed amongst the poor on the same day.[151] In addition she requests that

> a sermon shalbe preached in the said parish church of St Thomas yearly and every year for ever on the day that the parishioners of the said parish shall go on perambulation about the bounds of the said parish in the forenoon of the same day And that the minister which shall preach the same sermon yearly shall on the same day in which he shall preach the same sermon be paid for her sermon ten shillings.

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[147] Cummings, p.137.
[148] TNA PROB11/161/251. Alice Pirrie likewise leaves money to be delivered "every Easter Monday or Tuesday" (TNA PROB11/155/345).
[149] *King James Bible* (1611), (Cambridge: Chadwyk-Healey, 1996).
[150] TNA PROB11/163/331.
[151] TNA PROB11/167/506.

Ellenor further requires that a sermon be preached on New Year's Day in the parishes in which she and her husband had been born. The request for these sermons created a variety of scenes which took place at her direction and associated Ellenor with the idea of renewal analogous with the new year. The preaching of sermons produced congregations to hear them and the reference to the perambulation reiterated Ellenor's connection with the village. For some women, though, the desire was to be associated with more recent, political events through their bequests. Ann Pinn of Plymouth gives the mayor money to be spent

> on a minister to preach in the church of Plymouth aforesaid on every the third day of December in remembrance of the great and wonderful deliverance the Lord was pleased to work for the said town of Plymouth on that day in the year one thousand six hundred forty and three when the enemy came with great power and strength thereunto.[152]

This bequest marked the actual event and served to link Ann with it, making her vicariously present at the annual celebrations of the victory through the sermon which she commissioned and clearly establishing her political sensibilities.

Through these instructions, these testatrices extended and repeated the solemnisation of their funerals beyond the actual event by stipulating and ordering quasi-funeral ceremonies and activities to be enacted over periods of time after their deaths. Whereas their funeral scenes were fixed in both time and place, these events were more fluid, happening at other significant points and at a variety of sites. In the cases where this was a repeated event, the testatrix – or at least her memory – was resurrected with each iteration.

Props for memorialisation

The majority of women were not in a position to direct these sorts of acts of memorialisation, but they did use their wills as a way of constituting their bequests as artefacts of commemoration. As James notes,

[152] TNA PROB11/221/536. Plymouth declared for Parliament during the Civil Wars and was almost constantly besieged by the Royalists. There is a monument in Freedom Fields Park which commemorates the victory ('Sabbath Day Fight Memorial' *The Encyclopaedia of Plymouth History* (2011) <(https://web.archive.org/web/20120518051116/http://www.plymouthdata.info/Memorials%20Monuments-Sabbath%20Day%20Fight.htm> [Accessed 28 August 2018]). Ann's sermon presumably formed a part of these commemorations.

> A testament could prove useful as a seminal tool in fashioning an identity worthy of memorial recognition. It integrated the disparate parts of a woman's life and presented them as a coherent whole. The making of a will was a two-fold statement, an acknowledgement of mortality linked to an *ergo sum* confirmation of existence and, through the apparatus of bequests focused on remembrance, an insistence of the continuing importance of that existence even after death.[153]

The act of leaving a will itself ensured at least limited remembrance. It would be read and proved at points following the woman's death; bequests would be given, claimed, fulfilled, meaning that the testatrix's wishes would be rehearsed and repeated beyond her own life. However, gifts of bread and money at a funeral, or sermons every year implied a desire to be remembered more actively into the future; despite the refutation of purgatory and the concomitant rejection of intercession which meant that acts of commemoration had no influence on salvation, there remained a human desire to be remembered and memorialised, and this is clearly evident in women's wills. Often, it was achieved through everyday objects given with the tag "my", but sometimes there was a conscious intent on the part of the testatrix to ensure her memorialisation, transforming the passivity of remembrance into actions which ensured it, through the giving of props specifically designed to serve as *memento mori* and, through these gifts, the woman was projected into the future.

Wills are littered with gifts of rings, given as an enduring form of memorialisation. Where these had been owned and worn by the testatrix, they were intimately associated with her and her now absent body. In both *The Duchess of Malfi* and *The Fair Maid of the West,* the act of writing a will is accompanied by the giving of a ring to bind the testator to their beneficiary and to symbolise their union; in death, these symbols of marriage, no longer needed by the testatrix, become potent vehicles for memorialisation. Susanna Southcott leaves her wedding ring to her daughter Jane, with her "other great ring" going to her cousin and her "next best ring" to her other daughter.[154] Alice Marshall likewise bequeaths her wedding ring to her "loving daughter", Susan, and a ring "I have like unto my wedding ring" to her granddaughter.[155] This comparison of the second ring to a wedding ring enhances its significance, establishing a parity between the two of them in terms of their worth and extrinsic value and creating equity between the two recipients. In a similar way, when Mary Collyer gives her

[153] James, p.60.
[154] TNA PROB11/159/560.
[155] TNA PROB11/159/305.

son, Robert Rippen, “my last and best wedding ring of gold”, she is not only giving him something of worth, she is also making a value judgement of the ring; it is not the one she had received from his father, but it is the “best” and Robert is given it because of its quality.[156] When Jane Godwin died of the plague in 1645, she left “unto the said William her son her wedding ring of gold”. Jane’s husband had predeceased her by just a few days, meaning that her son had lost both his parents in quick succession. The wedding ring, given by his father to his mother, represents a tangible remembrance of them and their relationship, and the place that William held within it.

Descriptions of rings serve to distinguish between them, but also to imbue them with intrinsic value. Sara Harris leaves her daughter Hester “my gold ring with a diamond set in it” and her son “my little gold ring with a red stone in it”.[157] However, her bequest to her daughter Sara of “my signet ring” may well have been entirely pragmatic as they shared an initial (presuming that the ring featured an initial letter), but the additional description of it – “that I wear upon my finger” – privileges it and suffuses it with extrinsic value. All three rings are described as “mine”, but only the signet ring was habitually worn, creating a link between mother and daughter that transcends the practical and the financial and moves the ring from the finger of the mother to that of the daughter. Similarly, Mary Meredith gifts rings to her children with descriptions which reflect their inherent value: to John, she leaves “one diamond ring”; to William “one turkey gold ring”, to Nicholas “my white or knagatha [agate] gold ring” and to Charles “one gold Amotist [amethyst] ring”.[158] In addition, she assigns to her daughter, Sarah “one other gold ring with a white stone in it like a diamond” and her daughter Bridget Hereford “one gold ring with five coloured stones”. In describing each of these rings, Mary not only distinguishes them for the sake of clarity, but she also demonstrates her worth. However, she wills her grandson, Abell Snell, “his fathers best ring of gold and his fathers turkey gold ring and one little gold diamond ring with a square stone in it of mine” and this gift, along with bequests of money to him and his brothers, suggests a desire to pass on her son-in-law’s memory as well as material possessions and, in doing so, to constitute herself as a conduit between Abell’s father and himself.

[156] TNA PROB11/201/602.
[157] TNA PROB11/187/295.
[158] TNA PROB11/201/216.

These pre-existing rings appear alongside new ones, given specifically for mourning or as *memento mori*. Giving memorial rings was a custom which, whilst it had its origins before the Reformation, grew in popularity and was a common feature of wills during the early modern period.[159] Memorial rings served as salutary reminders of death, both that of the testatrix who left them and the wearer's own ultimate end. Special rings were often commissioned using sums of money left for the purpose.[160] Anne Hancock, for instance, allots twenty shillings apiece to a number of relatives "to buy or make them rings as tokens of the remembrance of my love towards them"; Mary Meredith allocates forty shillings to make "a ring in remembrance of me" for each of the four overseers of her will.[161] These bequests put a monetary value on the remembrance of the deceased, and on the relationships which they encoded, with twenty or forty shillings being the most common sums expended. Rings were not only decorative and designed to prompt remembrance, they were also portable credit and, in specifying a price, testators were giving their legatees a source of money, should they need it in the future, thus making practical provision, as well as creating a sentimental link to them. In addition, the durability of rings meant that they would be available for the recipient to bequeath on to their heirs, passing on, with the ring, the memory of the woman who had commissioned it so that her presence resonated into the future.

Death's head rings were particularly popular, offering as they did a physical prompt to the wearer to live well and some women expressly commissioned them as *memento mori.*[162] Mary Chetwynd, for example, specifies that her brothers should be given "each of them a ring of gold having a picture of deaths head on them worth twenty shillings apiece".[163] In addition to their proscribed intrinsic value, the rings had salutary potential and Mary's intention is that both she and the brevity of life should be remembered by their wearers. This function was redoubled when women left their own death's head rings. Anne Elliott singles out one of her daughters to receive "my gold ring which hath a deathshead in it".[164] She gives a gold ring to her son and her wedding ring to

[159] Mourning rings became embraced as a fashion (James, p.81); Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion,* p.252.
[160] As James observes, rings were commissioned and given by women from across all levels of society (p.265).
[161] TNA PROB11/228/537; PROB11/201/216.
[162] Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion,* p.252.
[163] TNA PROB11/165/461.
[164] TNA PROB11/173/633.

another daughter, but it is Judith who is given the means to remember not only her mother, but also the certainty of her own death. Amongst her bequests Jane Bower leaves her wedding ring to her mother, a second ring to her father, money to buy her niblings rings, and a death's head ring to someone whose relationship to her is not specified. The gifts to her parents of rings which she presumably wore mark their relationship as special and giving rings to both of them bound her to them and them to one another through shared provenance. Similarly, in giving rings to her nieces and nephews, she not only connects herself to them, but them to one another in shared remembrance of her. The death's head ring is given to someone outside of this immediate family circle, to someone who may not have had such a close association with others who would have had a collective remembrance of her. In this instance, the ring would remind the recipient of Jane and link her to them through the physical remembrance it contained.

Figure 14. Seventeenth-century death's head ring.[165]

These rings were a visible reminder of the ubiquity of death and the necessity of its acceptance in order to achieve one's own good death. Rings with mottoes made this engagement with achieving a good death even more explicit. Amye Gough, for example, gives

> unto my brother Robert Gough esq John Gough Hugh Gough Gregory Gough and Francis Gough forty shillings a piece to be bestowed in rings and they to wear them for

[165] Reproduced with kind permission of the Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter. The ring depicts and skeleton and hour glass. The legend inside reads "in god & thee my joy shall be".

> my sake and unto my two brother in laws John Harlow esq and Mr Richard Prince to each of them forty shillings a piece to be bestowed in rings likewise and they to wear them for my sake and my will and meaning is that there shall be a motto engraven on every of the same rings as my brothers and brothers in law or the major part of them shall agree thereon.[166]

Again, the rings have an intrinsic value, but they are also explicitly designed to serve as memorials to her. They are to be worn "for my sake" and to be engraved with a *memento mori* message and, by giving rings to a group of men, Amye creates a memorial fraternity with her at the heart of it. These men could, by majority vote, choose what was inscribed on the rings, but, by instigating the action she was present in the discussion, situating her, beyond her death, in a conversation about how to remember her and the message about dying well. She commissions an act of writing, and in doing so, co-authors her own memorial. Elizabeth Dowrich of Exeter goes further, dictating the wording to appear on rings to be made for her four sisters: "Remember thy end", confirming her authorship.[167] Where rings which already contained such axioms were left by women who had owned and worn them, their memorial function was redoubled. The ring that Joane Trosse of Exeter confers on her niece, Elizabeth, already has a motto – "this blisfull seale of heart and love nothing but death shall it remove" – engraved on it.[168] Joane describes it as "my ring" suggesting that it is something which she had possessed for some time, but the maxim indicates a memorial function. In giving it, she seeks to have her niece remember not only her, but also, by extension, the person for whom it was originally worn. It therefore represents a tangible link between Joane and Elizabeth, and the third party whose memory the ring still bears. Elizabeth was the daughter of Joane's brother, William, who died in 1625. Whilst William's will makes no mention of memorial rings, it is possible that Joane wore one for him and, if this were the case, in passing it to Elizabeth she passes on a referent of her father.[169]

The bequest of something new as a memorial of a past relationship blurred the boundaries between life and death, past and future. As discussed in chapter two, Ann Doddington leaves numerous bequests of her jewellery to the daughters of her executrix, but gives

[166] TNA PROB11/231/678.
[167] TNA PROB11/157/339.
[168] TNA PROB11/182/23.
[169] TNA PROB11/149/544.

> to the right honourable the Lady Elizabeth wife to the right honourable the Lord John Poulett baron of Hinton Saint George the daughter of my good Lady Stallinge and my most honourable dear friend and kinswoman the sum of twenty pounds of good and lawful money of England to buy her whatsoever it shall please her to wear for my sake.[170]

The gifts of her own jewellery suggest an intimate relationship between her and the women to whom they were given; her bequest to Lady Elizabeth appears to be more about establishing her status through Elizabeth's remembrance of her. Elizabeth is charged with choosing what she would like to wear, but implicit is the expectation that she would want to remember Ann and that her selection would encode their relationship and the esteem in which she should be remembered. Ann commissions an act of remembrance and presumes Elizabeth's participation in it. In doing so, she transforms Elizabeth's body into a site of memorialisation, physically marking the association between the two of them and establishing Elizabeth's public remembrance of her.[171]

Costumes for Memorialisation

Gifts of clothing similarly constituted the bodies of the recipients as sites of remembrance, as well as being practical covering for them. If the provision of mourning clothes created a semi-static funeral tableau, then bequests of clothes which the testatrix had habitually worn reanimated the items as they became a moving part of the daily lives of the recipients, at the same time "retaining the identity and form of the wearer".[172] Peter Stallybrass notes that, "among the aristocracy, the leaving of clothes is an assertion of the power of the gift-giver and the dependency of the recipient", but gifts of clothes were prominent in the wills of women from across the social range, suggesting that such bequests were about more than mere charity and also served a memorial function.[173] In leaving garments to individuals, testatrices were engaged in making decisions which encoded a complex raft of meaning. Their clothes reflected them and their self-fashioning in life, marking their rank and social standing; they represented a practical gift of body covering, to be given, perhaps, where need was perceived,

[170] TNA PROB11/198/256.
[171] This is echoed in Ann's gifts to Lady Elizabeth's sons of ten pounds each for a piece of plate to be used for "my sake", creating an artefact of remembrance, to be used daily and in a semi-public arena (TNA PROB11/198/256).
[172] Stallybrass p.310.
[173] Stallybrass, p.310.

enacting charity; they fulfilled a desire to share, which may have been the intention from the very conception of the garment, and they affirmed a woman's desire to be remembered, forming a portable memorial to the physical body from which they had been taken.[174] Whittle and Griffiths argue that clothing was gendered, not only in terms of the fact that it served as a signifier of whether the wearer was male or female, but also because "men and women seem to have had different attitudes towards clothing", and this is reflected in wills.[175] In some cases, her clothes were all that a woman had to bequeath, and, as such, it was an important vehicle for her self-fashioning and the way it was catalogued and bestowed was a chief concern.

Some women gave their clothing as a single bequest. Edith Charleton, for example, leaves "all my wearing apparrall unto my said sister Bevan and my sister in law Mary Carlton equally betwixt them", treating her wardrobe as a divisible entity, sharing it between her closest female relatives and giving them responsibility for agreeing an equitable split.[176] Mellis Jennings had received all of her mother Agnes' apparel in her will; when Mellis died just four months later, she gave all her clothes, including those which her mother had left her, to her sisters.[177] Agnes had perceived that the unmarried Mellis' need was greater than that of her other daughters; with no children of her own, Mellis shares her mother's clothes with her siblings. Other testatrices were more selective and separated out specific items, matching them to individuals in such a way as to reflect their affective relationship with the recipient.[178] Jane Russell, for example, leaves "to my grandchild Agnes Markwell twenty pounds in money and my gold ring my best wearing gown and best petticoat" and to "Sarah Forest the wife of Henry Forest my second best gown and one paire of woollen stockings" whilst "Ann Bailiffe widdow" receives one petticoat, before the remainder of her clothing is given to be divided between her five grandchildren.[179] Agnes is marked out

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[174] Ann Hollander observes that "the clothes themselves might form a kind of family possession, each garment being transmissible to the next generation and never intended merely for one person, even when it was first made" (*Sex and Suits. The Evolution of Modern Dress* (New York: Kodanska International, 1994), p.19). The idea of self-fashioning through clothes will be discussed further in relation to Lucy Reynell's portrait in chapter four.
[175] Whittle and Griffiths, p.12.
[176] TNA PROB11/206/327.
[177] TNA PROB11/249/307; PROB11/249/305.
[178] Maxine Berg, 'Women's Consumption and the Industrial Classes of Eighteenth-Century England' *Journal of Social History* 30:2 (1996) 415-434. Susan James discusses the disposal of clothes in the Tudor period in some detail.
[179] Dorset, England, Wills and Probates, 1565-1858 (*Ancestry.co.uk*) Wm\W\R43.

from her peers, not only by the fact that she is the only one named, but also by the bequest of Jane's best gown. In receiving her second-best gown and a pair of stockings, Sarah's importance is established, whilst the gift to the widow, Ann, suggests a degree of charity in the bequest and perhaps indicates the social distance between her and Jane.

Detailed descriptions of clothes helped to distinguish between different articles, but also allowed a testatrix to display the quality of her apparel and the strength of her affections for the people to whom it was given. Thus, when Mary Meredith leaves "unto my said sister in law Bridget Hatch my silk grosgrain gown which is embroidered Item all the rest of my wearing apparrall I give and bequeath unto my two daughters Bridget Hereford and Sarah Meredith equally between them", she singles out her sister-in-law, specifying for her a gown which demonstrates her affection for her, but also suggests Mary's desire to display her quality.[180] Similarly, Hanna Clarke outlines a catalogue of clothes, complete with descriptions of their fabric and colour: "one fine Holland apron"; "a new smock and a red cloth petticoat"; "a white Holland petticoat and a red cotton petticoat with a silver lace"; "three white waistcoats two dowlas aprons"; "two second best holland aprons and one new dowlas smocked"; "two holland aprons and one smock".[181] Her canvas apron goes to the daughter of John Gay, whilst her cousin receives "a taffeta coat and petticoat a yellow silk coat a tawny petticoat" and Sarah Hobbs "a tawny coat and waistcoat and one pair of bodice". These bequests illustrate the extent of Hanna's wardrobe, the array of garments which she owns and which she distributes to a range of people as she sees appropriate. This specific designation of propriety is more explicitly highlighted in the will of Elizabeth Batten, whose gifts clearly match the standing of the people to whom they are given.[182] Her sisters and cousins are the recipients of a collection of fine garments: "silk moleskin gloves"; a "silk rose colour taby petticoat"; a "green sepiternam gown" laced with bond lace; a "green mowheire petticoat"; a "black silk pinke gown which is now ripped abroad"; a "silk callamancha gown" and a

[180] TNA PROB11/201/216.
[181] TNA PROB11/299/738. James observes that, "for most women … red petticoat, plain or ornamented, was a 'must have' article of clothing in whatever cloth the owner could afford" (p. 266) and Ninya Mikhaila and Jane Malcolm-Davis note that "[i]t has been suggested that one of the reasons for the use of the color red was a belief in its prophylactic ability to protect good health (Ninya Mikhaila and Jane Malcolm-Davies *The Tudor Tailor: Reconstructing 16th Century Dress* (London: Batsford Ltd., 2006), pp.4-41).
[182] TNA PROB11/180/115.

pair of “Turkey grosgrain gloves”.[183] Women outside of her immediate family circle receive less elaborate garments: a flannel petticoat; a cloth gown; “my sad tawny petticoat lately dyed” and a “black serge gown”. Despite the relative lack of quality in these latter bequests, however, they are at least separated out from the remainder of her “linen clothes” which are divided amongst her four sisters. In giving these items separately, Elizabeth indicates the esteem within which each legatee is regarded, but she also demonstrates her own worth via the careful description of the pieces.

In some cases, bequests of clothing reflect the activities of the testatrix. Mary Heaman leaves her best coat and waistcoat to her kinswoman, her best hat to her sister, her best gown and apron to her daughter-in-law and her Sunday petticoat and waistcoat to Elizabeth Randall, whose relationship to her is not specified.[184] Her ‘best’ clothes were not her Sunday clothes; she had at least two waistcoats, one for ‘best’ and one for Sunday and they are given separately. The gift of ‘Sunday’ clothes makes visible the division of Mary Heaman’s life, separating out her day of rest and public worship from the rest of her week. It suggests a performativity, a costuming to play the role, a need for Mary to wear specific clothes to demarcate herself on the Sunday, rather than on other days, and to provide her legatee with the garments to do the same.[185] When Jane Godwin bequeaths to her “cousin Parris wife of Gloucester” her “stuff safeguard”, she places herself outside of the home and costumes herself, and her beneficiary, accordingly.[186] Ann Warren, a servant, leaves “unto Joane Servant unto my mistress a petticoat and a waistcote a smock two quoifes and two crossclothes” before leaving the remainder of her “wearing apparel woollen and linen” to be divided between her sister and cousin.[187] Ann’s example suggests

[183] Sempiternum was a quality of woollen cloth ("sempiternum, n." *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, June 2018) <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/175809> [Accessed 16 July 2018]); Pink was a decorative hole or eyelet punched in a garment ("pink, n.4." *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018) <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/144202> [Accessed 16 July 2018]); Calamanco was a woollen cloth “glossy on the surface, and woven with a satin twill and chequered in the warp, so that the checks are seen on one side only” ("calamanco, n." *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, June 2018) <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/26141> [Accessed 16 July 2018]).
[184] TNA PROB11/285/47.
[185] This sense of performativity will be discussed further in chapter four, in relation to Lucy Reynell’s portrait.
[186] TNA PROB11/166/426. A safeguard was an outer skirt worn by women when riding ("safeguard, n." *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, June 2018) <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/169678> [Accessed 16 July 2018]).
[187] TNA PROB11/183/519.

affection between the two servants but also an implied desire for remembrance, not only by Joane but also by "my mistress" who might see Joane dressed in Anne's clothes; it also demonstrates that such memorial intentions were not restricted to women of higher rank.

In her will, a testatrix undressed her own body, often to dress several others, spreading her memory around her family and friends, giving garments according to her perception of need, or to reflect the rank of the recipient. Bequests of clothes were practical, but they also allowed women to seek memorialisation, through the close association between the garment and the body which had previously animated it. The descriptions of individual items recall the life events which they had costumed and implied the testatrix's desire for remembrance through the reanimation of them after her death.

Influencing Others

Bequests of rings, jewellery and clothing offered testatrices an opportunity to use their wills in order to instigate self-memorialisation in the future. Whilst not as enduring as a tomb or grave-stone, such items were more readily accessible to women of all ranks and their deployment as commemorative artefacts demonstrates the extent to which women self-consciously used their wills in order to create and assert images of themselves. This image was a multi-faceted one, as sister, cousin, mistress and mother and, as well as providing materially for the people they were leaving behind, testatrices also used their wills as a way of exercising their guidance and influence into the future. As such, I argue that wills can be read alongside other forms of writing, such as mothers' legacy texts, which proliferated in the sixteenth- and seventeenth-centuries, as part of the trend for "written forms of expression reserved for, and sanctioned by, the deathbed (whether fictive or real) [which] constitute a large proportion of female publications during the Early Modern period".[188] It was determined in chapter two that women who wrote wills were 'intentional' authors, providing the impetus and content of the document and, where this included instruction or guidance to other people, it situates such women alongside those who left legacy texts for their children. The scope of the two texts might be different, but the intention was the

[188] Lucinda M. Becker, *Death and the Early Modern Englishwoman* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2003), p.181.

same. The testatrix would not be present to see her advice enacted, but she used her will as a vehicle for projecting it, and therefore herself, into the future.

The primary function of mothers' legacy texts was as instructional handbooks containing the advice and guidance which the woman would not be able to dispense in person. This meant that motherhood provided women with a status which wifehood did not: as a mother, a woman had the right to exercise spiritual influence over her child, offering her "a position of authority from which to speak", and to write.[189] Although legacy texts use a number of genres – "letters, prayers, translations, dialogues, family histories and collections of precepts" – they share certain qualities: they "feature a maternal voice, they are written to children, they are cast as deathbed advice, and they provide religious counsel" and, by focusing on 'female' subjects like childbirth and breastfeeding, women assumed the authority to break the silence and enter societal discourse.[190] Elizabeth Richardson does not claim to be close to death – and, in fact, asserts that she "will (while I live) daily adde my prayers and blessing for your present and future happinesse" to her *A Ladies Legacie to her Daughters* – but she still frames its conception in terms which conform to accepted definitions of motherhood and spiritual instruction.[191] Her *Legacie* is, she says "a motherly remembrance" and she "commend[s] this my labour into your loving acceptance, that in remembering your poor mother, you may be also put in minde to performe your humble duty and service to our heavenly Father".[192] Dorothy Leigh likewise invokes her position as a mother as justification for writing, comparing the preparation of her text to the pain of labour: "Is it possible", she asks, "that she, which hath carried her child within her, so neere her hart, and brought it forth into this world with so much bitter paine, so many grones and cries, can forget it?".[193] The corporeality of the act, the carrying, the pain, the groans and cries ground her labour in the physical; the proximity of the unborn baby to her physical heart

[189] Helen Wilcox, *Women and Literature in Britain, 1500-1700* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) p.56.
[190] Jennifer Heller, *The Mother's Legacy in Early Modern England* (London and New York: Routledge, 2011), p.2. Heller identifies twenty such texts written by women between 1575 and 1673; Marsha Urban, *Seventeenth-Century Mother's Advice Books* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), p.9.
[191] Elizabeth Richardson, *A Ladies Legacie to her Daughters,* in *Women's Writing In Stuart England* ed. by Sylvia Brown (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 1999), p.163.
[192] Brown, p.162-3.
[193] Dorothy Leigh, *The Mothers Blessing or The godly counsaile of a Gentle-woman not long since deceased, left behind for her CHILDREN* (London: Iohn Budge, 1616), *Women's Writing In Stuart England* ed. by Sylvia Brown (Stroud: Sutton Publishing, 1999) pp.15-87 (p.23).

is now transformed into their proximity to her emotional and spiritual heart and her groans and cries are now the words and exhortations contained in her text.

Although Richardson and Leigh employ elements of testamentary writing, it is Elizabeth Joscelin's *Legacy to her Unborn Child* which makes the most extensive use of the form and language of the will. Experiencing "apprehension" during her pregnancy which she felt might "preuent me for [sic] executing that care", the "religious traininge [of?] our childe", she ordered a winding sheet and wrote a book of advice for her daughter.[194] She sees such instruction as the logical corollary to the delivery of the baby; it is the "good office I might doo for my childe".[195] The text is described as "my little legacy", and casts her husband in the role of "ouerseer" and appoints her daughter, Theodora, as "executor" of her intentions.[196] This language is echoed in the approbation to the printed edition, written by Thomas Goad, who, whilst acknowledging that married women – "under Covert-baron" – were disbarred from "disposing by Will and Testament any temporal Estate", describes Elizabeth as a "truly rich Bequeather" and the text as "a twin-like Sister" for her child, "issuing from the same Parent, and seeing the Light about the same time".[197] In publishing Joscelin's text more widely, Goad creates for Theodora a spiritual family who have all benefitted from the guidance of her mother. The document is, effectively, a will through which Joscelin makes provision for her child, if not physically, then spiritually.

Richardson, Leigh, Joscelin and the other writers of legacy texts combined their position as mothers (or pseudo-mothers, in the case of Nicholas Breton who wrote *The Mothers Blessing* in 1602) with the authority accorded them by the will form to frame and authorise their advice.[198] These women did not write wills and Mary Prior asserts that "no wives who made wills were writers".[199] However, as I have demonstrated, women who wrote wills *were* writers (intentional ones), and I further contend that, whilst the writers of legacy texts appropriated the form of the will in order to deliver their advice and guidance, women frequently used their

[194] Brown, p.106.
[195] Brown, p.106.
[196] Brown, p.106-7.
[197] Elizabeth Joscelin 'The Approbation' *The Mothers Legacie To her vnborn Childe* (London: Iohn Haviland, 1624).
[198] Nicholas Breton *The Mothers Legacy* (London: Iohn Smethwicke, 1602).
[199] Mary Prior, 'Wives and Wills 1558-1700' in *English Rural Society 1500-1800: Essays in honour of Joan Thirsk* ed. by John Chartres and David Hey (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), pp.201-226 (p.223).

actual wills as a vehicle for leaving not only their property, but also their instructions, counsel and influence.

Sometimes, this was accompanied by contingency clauses designed to ensure that this advice was heeded. Margery Price announces that if "my son in law Robert Taylor [shall] sin or mislead my executor upon any pretence whatsoever that then neither he nor his children shall receive have or take any benefit of any of the legacies in this will given or bequeathed".[200] The linking of 'mispleading' – a verbal act – with sin and pretence suggests that she did not have a particularly high opinion of her son-in-law, and the quasi-synonymous terms – 'receive', 'have' and 'take' – emphasise the consequences of the scenario which she describes. She casts Robert Taylor as a beneficiary, but she envisages a situation in which he might mis-play his role and therefore seeks to pre-empt this by specifying the consequences of his potential actions. Her will thus offers two hypothetical future scenes: one in which Taylor abides by her conditions and receives the money, and one where he 'sins' and, as a result, both he and her grandchildren suffer. These scenes are not fixed, but mutable, depending on Taylor's behaviour; Margery identifies them both and offers a pre-emptive solution. Similarly, Maud Hobb leaves money and goods to her daughter Jane,

> upon the condition that the said Jane or any of her executors or assigned shall not trouble molest or sue my executor for any debts due or demanded whatsoever which if one or either of them do then the said Jane is not to have any thing which is in this my last will and testament expressed.[201]

Jane's gifts are contingent upon her not disputing the will. Maud's executor is to act as her proxy in devising her goods according to her intent and she empowers him, through the document, preventing disputation and establishing a contingency against it.

Other women used their wills to attempt to maintain familial relations after their death, a role which they fulfilled in life. Katherine Chaundler urges her children to divide her estate

> equally … betwixt them hoping they will in the presence of God agree and join together as brothers and sisters in the division of such small estate among themselves (God hath blessed me withall) to each one equal part and portion thereof in love and amity each to the other.[202]

[200] TNA PROB 11/228/66.
[201] TNA PROB11/252/441.
[202] TNA PROB11/253/225.

Her instruction does not come with a penalty; she just hopes that her children will continue to live in "love and amity" with each other. In making provision for her children, Elizabeth Secill specifically requests that her sons be brought up with her daughters, once again seeking to keep her family together in her absence.[203] This fear of the separation of children is also evident in Jane Edmond's requests that

> if my said children cannot conveniently live together they maybe disposed in such places as they may live in the fear of god and walk in the ways of the gospel of Jesus Christ and I desire the Lord to give them hearts after his own I will that they may walk before him and be blessed.[204]

Her will contains a confidence that the children could remain together, but makes alternative plans for if they could not, placing them into godly households in which they might be brought up as she would have done, perhaps those of the three "good friends" and her cousin whom she appoints as joint executors "for the sole good benefit and behoof of" her four children. She therefore transposes her own hopes and desires into the future and locates her children within a scene in which they would live in the "fear of god" and, at the same time, implies a responsibility on behalf of her executors, thereby exerting her influence on all parties. Elizabeth Cooke seeks to extend her sway to the end of her daughter's life, leaving Thomasine Greet "two pairs of sheets one whereof to be for a shroud … also one smock wherein my desire is she may be buried".[205] These bequests give Thomasine a practical costume for her own burial, but also allow Elizabeth to be vicariously present at her daughter's death, providing maternal care and comfort from beyond the grave. These women used their wills as a means of ensuring the continuation of their domestic sphere in their absence. They are not as involved as the texts left by Dorothy Leigh or Elizabeth Joscelin, but Anne, Jane, Katherine and the Elizabeths were equally concerned with ensuring the spiritual and emotional future of their children and employed the means at their disposal – their wills – to try to do so.

Margery Pierson of Gloucester uses a document classed as a will in the register not to influence her son's behaviour after her demise but before it.[206] As

[203] TNA PROB11/151/355.
[204] TNA PROB11/258/306.
[205] TNA PROB11/228/1.
[206] Gloucestershire, England, Wills and Inventories, 1541-1858 (*Ancestry.co.uk*) 203472.

with Elizabeth Richardson, there is no mention of any proximity to death; indeed, the purpose of the document is to ensure that her son, despite the "sums of money paid and disbursed to her and to her use and towards her livelyhood and maintenance" already, would continue to support her. She promises to leave him all her property "excluding all her wearing clothes and apparel" at her death "provided always and it is agreed between the said Margery Pierson and William Pierson that the said Margery shall and may use and enjoy the said goods cattels chattels and household stuff" until her death, or until William saw fit to request them.[207] She even makes provision for normal wear and tear to be taken into consideration. The document is undated, so there is no way of knowing how far ahead of her death it was made, but, given the lack of commendation or reference to funeral arrangements, it reads more like a legal instrument and Margery appears to have appropriated the form of the will in order to entail her son. Her intentions were to be "known unto all men by these present", broadcasting her request and meaning and publicly obliging William to allow her what she wishes. If this was not initially intended as a will, then Margery, like the writers of mothers' legacy texts, employed the language of the document to her own ends and it may be that, with no actual will, Margery's son presented this text as such in order to inherit her property.

Nor was it only children's futures over which women presumed to exercise influence. Susanna Southcott appoints her "welbeloved brother Sir Sanders Duncombe knight" to be executor of her will, appointing him to educate and bring up her four children, "strictly charging them to bee ruled and advised by him in their course of life" and allowing him to "give and dispose as he shall think to them that wilbe ruled of my children for a punishment to them that will rebell or transgress his precept".[208] These provisions bind her children in duty to their uncle, but Susanna goes further, granting her brother the power to protect "my children against any violence for our poore liveinges either from Sir George Southcott or any other". The violence which she feared was unlikely to have been physical force; rather, her instruction is designed to protect her children's portions

[207] Cattel is another word for property, frequently used in wills as a collocate with goods and chattels ("cattle, n." *Oxford English Dictionary Online* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018) <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/29037> [Accessed 24 July 2018]).
[208] TNA PROB11/159/560.

from an abuse of position by, or on behalf of, her brother-in-law.[209] That notwithstanding, her choice of the word suggests the strength of her feelings against her brother-in-law and of her conviction that he might attempt to undermine her wishes. She uses her will to not only instruct her brother in the positive actions which he was to undertake on behalf of her family, but also to publicly discourage Sir George from interfering in her arrangements for them by empowering her brother to resist him. There is a personal obligation placed on Sir Sanders – "praying him for brotherly love and affection which I knowe he beares me and myne" – and a public one placed on Sir George to leave her family in peace.

These examples of spiritual and practical guidance and counsel which the women would have given to their children had they lived demonstrate the power of the will as an instrument of women's self-fashioning. The will allowed them a space in which they could rehearse their instructions and offered an audience for their intentions, making them public. Their direction sometimes came with penalties and overseers or executors were cast as proxies in determining the extent to which the addressee had followed the advice. As a result, women's wills can be seen as part of the genre of mothers' legacy texts. However, like Penthea, testatrices also sought to exercise their influence over others, including people in positions of standing or authority.[210] The difference was that, whilst the writers of mothers' legacy texts adopted the language, form and structure of the will, these women appropriated the document itself as a vehicle for exercising control, expanding its scope and manipulating it for their own purposes.

Wills as Heterochronies

The range of scenes created by testatrices in their wills span from their past into a future which they will not see, via the present of the act of writing the document. However, Wall's assertion that a will contains a "strange time frame" because it is "written in the present tense and includes its imagined enactment in the future, but [it] is authorized by a past voice" assumes an unproblematic division into a

[209] "violence, n." *Oxford English Dictionary Online* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018) <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/223638> [Accessed 22 June 2018]. This is the same brother-in-law whom she feared would not allow her to be buried alongside her husband (see the section 'Sites of Burial' above).
[210] John Ford, *'Tis Pity She's a Whore and other plays* ed. by Marion Lomax (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp.81-163.

straightforward tripartite categorisation, with clearly differentiated periods.[211] It is my contention that timescales within wills are neither simple nor defined but are instead fluid and contingent. As the discussion of the various scenes conjured by women in their wills has demonstrated, a range of pasts, presents and futures exist within them and this synchronous existence of different 'times' creates not a linear construct but a web with strands weaving around one another, recording "slices of time" which are evoked and manipulated by testatrices as part of their self-fashioning.[212] The creation of this heterochronous texture also suggests an ambivalence about the teleological basis of *ars moriendi.* Whilst ostensibly adhering to the tenets of dying well, the employment of different time frames in wills as a way of ensuring memorialisation and continuing influence post-mortem indicates a resistance of death as a perfect end. Thus, there is a tension between the acceptance and welcoming of death as expressed in the commendation and the reluctance to relinquish life as represented by efforts for remembrance – between the spiritual and the physical which dying well texts urged *moriens* to forfeit willingly – which women navigated in their wills.

The will was written in the present tense; this is the present in which the testatrix is "sick in body but of good and perfect memory", the 'now' in which she makes her testament and it is often fixed by the date of writing, in which she accepts her death. It is also the present tense of her actions, the "I give" of her bequests, which is reiterated each time the will is read. Despite the ubiquity of the present tense, though, it is something which cannot endure; it might be repeated with each gift but, by the time the will is needed, the present is already in the past.

This gap between the present of writing and the 'present' in which the will was read is what might be described as a 'future past'.[213] When the testatrix writes her will, her death is in the future; by the time the will is executed, her writing of it is in the past; the gap in between will, in the future, be the past. This period ranged from woman to woman. Some, like Mary Eyton who acknowledges

[211] Wall, p.285-6.
[212] Michel Foucault, (trans. Miskowiec, J.) 'Of Other Spaces' *Diacritics* Vol 16, No. 1. (1986) 22-27 (p.26). For a discussion of this article and the issues raised by the translation of the original French, see Peter Johnson, 'Unravelling Foucault's 'different spaces'' *History of the Human Sciences* Vol. 19, No. 4, (2006) 75-90.
[213] I mean this not in the sense of the grammatical tense, but as a way of describing the period between the writing of the will and its enactment.

that “it is a very unfitting thing that any should be troubled with the disposing of their goods when they should have most cause to commend their souls to the mercy of God”, made their wills in advance of their death, creating an extended future past.[214] More often wills were made on the deathbed: that of Elizabeth Lugg, for instance, was composed just “two hours or there about before her departure”.[215] Although the future past in each case is different, both wills fix one end of it by recording the date it was written but this was not always the case. Susan Attwood’s will was drafted over an extended period of time leading up to her death: “about the tenth of October anno domini one thousand six hundred forty five in the presence of the witnesses undernamed the said deceased divers times within the quarter of a year past and especially within six weeks before her decease”.[216] The use of “about” blurs the date of writing and the repeated rehearsal problematises the notion of ‘now’, placing it in a state of flux, moving with each instalment of writing.

The establishment of the ‘now’ in which the woman is able to write was immediately undermined by the acknowledgement that the present will not last, that “nothing is more certain than death and nothing more uncertain than the hour thereof”, establishing the distinction between the confidence of the present, as represented by the fact that the will is being written, and the uncertainty of the time of death.[217] However, whilst death represented the end of earthly existence, it marked the beginning of the eternal life thereafter and the expectation of achieving “everlasting life in his glorious kingdom of heaven” or the like is overtly expressed.[218] Edith Guppie, for example, relies on her belief in Christ “by and through whose merits and mediation I rest in assured hope of everlasting salvation”; Elizabeth Welsteed is “trusting and assuredly persuading my self that by and through his precious death and passion and not by any means or deserts of my own I shalbe made partaker of everlasting life”.[219] Thus, the uncertainty about when they will die is mitigated by the conviction of their salvation, of their achievement of life everlasting. This everlasting life is the testatrix’s future – an infinite, ‘super future’ – the conclusion of which is indeterminate and will only be achieved by resurrection. As a result, the future becomes multifaceted: although,

[214] TNA PROB11/195/527.
[215] Bristol Archive FCW1545/1/6.
[216] PROB11/196/403.
[217] FCW1631/1/39 Anna Clarke.
[218] Margery Pyott Gloucestershire Archive D340a/F1.
[219] TNA PROB11/171/162; PROB11/270/13.

in one future, the testatrix will die, in another she will attain everlasting life and will enjoy that into yet another future.

In addition, the testatrix used her will to engage with a series of more immediate futures, the most immediate of which was her funeral. This future was certain, but the timing of it was again, undetermined; whatever a testatrix might request in terms of place, attendants, clothing and so forth, she could not specify a time of burial. However, there were other futures which she was able to determine. In some cases, the choice of timescale was pragmatic, depending on when money or property could be made available. Anne Sparrow of Yeovil stipulates that her legatees had to wait until the money could be raised before receiving their bequests, and not sue her executor in the meantime, thus rendering the future uncertain, whereas Elinor Avery's gift to her son is to be paid within six months after her death, but that to her grandchildren within a month, representing the speed with which the various amounts could be raised.[220] Other future dates employed included the traditional divisions of the year such as "the feasts of the annunciation of the blessed virgin Mary, the nativity of St John Baptist, St Michael the archangel and the birth of our lord", or other holy days:[221] Alice Pirrie's bequest of money to be distributed to the poor on the Monday or Tuesday closest to Easter each year, for example, projects a recurring future, ensuring that she would be remembered each time, associating her own death with that of Christ.[222] Women also pinned their bequests to specific points in the legatee's future: when they reached eighteen or twenty-one, or on their day of marriage. These dates were personal and specific to the beneficiary and, by giving gifts to be delivered on these days, the testatrix was able to be metaphorically present at mile-stone moments.

Not all futures could, however, be precisely determined. Elizabeth Slaughter permits seven years for her son to return to England and claim his inheritance; Elizabeth Crumwell allows a year.[223] The return of these men might have happened at any point within these timescales and, as a result, there is both a fixed and mutable future at play – the one or seven year cut off point, and the unpredictable possibility of the man's arrival in advance of it. Other indeterminate

[220] TNA PROB11/247/703; PROB11/263/331.
[221] TNA PROB11/158/377 Anne Fownes.
[222] TNA PROB11/155/345.
[223] TNA PROB11/196/461; PROB11/208/384.

futures were represented by the imprecise terms employed: Mary Tayler instructs that the money allocated to her friends should be given "immediately"; Anne Brigdall dictates that her funeral preacher is to be paid "presently after my interment".[224] Both 'immediately' and 'presently' indicate a clear desire for the gifts to be given without delay, but, by using these terms, the women invoke a fluidity of time and, in effect, pass the responsibility for its determination to their executors and overseers.

The mutability of the future is perhaps understandable, but the past was also not a fixed construct, and women deliberately selected the aspects of it which they wanted to present. Again, in some cases the evocation of the past was a practical one. References to the purchase of property were made in order to verify a woman's ownership of it and justify their bequeathing of it. Alice Hill leaves a "chattel lease which I did lately purchase of Sir Charles Barkley" to her grandson; Joane Gould had also lately bought "lands tenements and hereditaments" in Dorchester, which she assigns to Walter Gould.[225] 'Lately' is an imprecise term. It may be that, writing on their deathbed, the women did not have ready access to the paperwork attending to the purchase, and so were unable to provide the date of it, but it may also be that 'lately' was an adequate descriptor to confirm ownership: it had been bought at a point before the writing of the will, so there was no doubt that it was theirs to give.

Other bequests served to bring the past into the future. Joane Trosse of Exeter bestows upon her niece Elizabeth "one guilded bowl that is marked as follows I T E" and "one silver bowl or goblet being the fellow Of that one my father deceased gave unto my said sister".[226] The engraved bowl had belonged to her father, John Trosse, and had been bequeathed to her by her mother, Elizabeth, who describes it as having been "likewise bought of Mr Garrett' in London.[227] Elizabeth had left it to Joane who now passes it to her niece. Her reference to the fact that her father had given the twin of the bowl to her sister, and the mention of his initials recall him and her mother and draws them into the life of their daughter and granddaughter. Joane uses the objects to bring the past into the present, to remember her parents as she writes the will and to project them into

[224] TNA PROB11/246/7; PROB11/186/334.
[225] TNA PROB11/184/430; PROB11/158/612.
[226] TNA PROB11/182/23.
[227] TNA PROB11/163/567.

the future. Time is concertinaed as her dead father and mother are reunited in her will and move into the future with her through her bequests.

Testatrices referenced a raft of pasts. They recorded their previous marital status, and, in fashioning themselves as "late the wife of", placed themselves in relation to their dead husband. They evoked the relationships they had with family and friends, through the designators used to describe them, or through the bequests given to them. Objects were not left in isolation but were attributed a provenance which placed them within the testatrix's past, including tools, implements and impedimenta of trade or commerce which conjured the testatrix's working life. However, these pasts were not static. Wills contain items which had been "lately" bought alongside those which the testatrix had owned for a period of time. Links to her family extended from her birth; those to her husband from the point of marriage; those to her children from their birth. Neither were these pasts objective but selected and manipulated by the testatrix as part of her self-fashioning. The pasts which she employed were those with which she wished to be associated and, as such, they were subjective and biased, carefully selected snapshots of her life.

These examples demonstrate the extent to which Wall's simple division into past, present and future is limited. As an alternative, I read wills as heterochronous, as combining within in them a number of "slices of time".[228] In addition, the testatrix herself exists in multiple iterations within the document: she is the living self – the one writing the will; the enduring self – the one which would 'live' *ad infinitum*; the decaying body which she commits to the earth and, in some instances, the version of herself which would be memorialised by tombs or monuments.[229] She evokes the past through relationships with other people who exist within the will, and projects herself into the future through the bequests, advice and instructions she leaves. These different selves exist panchronically within the text, but they are not necessarily incidental. Testatrices' use and manipulation of future timescales and the choice of nominated aspects of their past mean that they blur the distinction between past and present, present and future, past and future, life and death. Bequests scheduled for months or years after her death draw the testatrix back into the present of those who receive them, renewing her memory, recalling her to mind. Each time the will was read or

[228] Foucault, p.26.
[229] See chapter four for a discussion of this.

consulted, the present tense situated her in a new 'now', and, eventually, certain futures became the past, as the months and years went by, and the bequests were discharged, until everything except the everlasting life in heaven was consigned to history. As the will was folded, so was the time that it contained.

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The evocation of different sets and scenes within which the testatrix had existed, or within which her beneficiaries will act following her death, mirrors the creation of sets and scenes in drama. Whilst the latter are determined by the playwright on behalf of the protagonist, women's wills demonstrate the extent to which testatrices directed, costumed and provided props for scenes in which they would not appear and evoked scenes in which they had already lived. They used the authority bestowed by their proximity to death and the availability of will-making as a form of self-representation to dictate their own memorialisation, to create tableaux and to exert their influence over others. They assumed the right to dictate the future behaviour of their beneficiaries, and to stipulate contingencies should they not comply, manipulating them and presuming to continue the same influence as they had in life. Whilst they did not always leave intricately detailed instructions for their funerals, their provision of mourning clothes and charity for the poor implied an obligation on the part of their friends and family. Gifts explicitly designed to memorialise them illustrate their desire to be remembered and this request was amplified by those women who sought to have monuments and tombs built in their name. Bequests which referred to the past which were to be given at different points in the future mean that wills contain a range of timescales which were deliberately manipulated by the testatrix as a way of directing her own memorialisation and remembrance in both the immediate and perpetual future. In the same way that plays concertina time into the "two-hours' traffic of our stage", wills were used to contain swathes of time.[230] The story of the Duchess and Antonio, for example, spans at least three years, continues beyond her death, and ends with Delio's promise to raise their young son and "[t]o establish

[230] William Shakespeare, 'Romeo and Juliet' Prologue, l.12. *The Norton Shakespeare* ed. by Stephen Greenblatt, Walter Cohen, Jean. E. Howard and Katharine Eisaman Maus (New York and London: W.W. Norton & Company, 2008), pp.897-972.

this young hopeful gentleman / In's mother's right" into the future.[231] These events – the marriage, the birth of their children – take place over the course of the play, but remain within the play text, in the same way that the scenes recalled and projected by testatrices are contained within the will.

[231] John Webster, *The Duchess of Malfi* ed. by Monica Kendall (Harlow: Pearson Education, 2004) v.5.112-3.

Chapter Four

"The Life and Death of the religious and virtuous Lady, the Lady Lucie Reynell".[1]

Chapters two and three have argued that women's wills can be read as artefacts of self-fashioning and as examples of women's writing. As 'intentional authors', testatrices employed these documents to project a selective image of themselves and to record affective relationships with the people to whom they left their bequests. It has also been noted that gifts of clothing, jewellery and other objects which had belonged to the testatrix had a memorial function, with items transferring to the recipient the memory of the giver. In some cases, they used their wills to commission monuments to themselves in order to ensure that they were remembered and as a way of continuing to exert influence over others. I have demonstrated that these acts of memorialisation were controlled by testatrices and proposed that women manipulated the time-scales for giving as part of their design for self-fashioning. The concurrent existence within the will of different timeframes renders the document heterochronous, and the multiple iterations of the testatrix mean that she exists panchronically on the page.

For the vast majority of women whose wills have been discussed, this was the only document which they left; in this chapter, I consider the case of Lucy Reynell of Newton Abbot, whose will is just one of a number of texts which were produced either by or about her, and read it as part of a campaign of self-fashioning. These other texts – her portrait, her entries in the household account book, the contract drawn up for the almshouses which she established, the tomb she commissioned for her family and the hagiographic account of her life and death written by her nephew, Edward Reynell – articulate a clear desire to be remembered and to not only bestow but also exhibit charity. These texts were produced at different points in Lucy's life, therefore also allowing a diachronic consideration of her self-fashioning. As a result, they offer a unique opportunity

[1] Edward Reynell, *The Life and Death of the religious and virtuous Lady, the Lady Lucie Reynell of Ford in Devon: Who dyed the 18th of Aprill 1652 Whereunto is annexed A consolatory Epilogue for defected soules* (London: Henry Seile, 1654).

to situate Lucy's will within a textual web and make it possible to assess the extent to which the self which is projected in it is congruent with that presented in life.

This case study, therefore, draws together the methodological strands of this thesis by exploring how ideas of self-fashioning, autobiography and women's writing can be applied to a body of work by or about a single woman. Firstly, by reading a range of texts as autobiographical, I, like critics such as David Booy, James Olney and Anne Lawrence-Mathers, argue for an expanded category of texts which can be considered as 'life-writing', but further extend this to include wills.[2] Secondly, I assert that Lucy's texts represent repeated instances of her participation in authorship. Finally, by considering her texts as a body of work, I seek to problematise the idea that, in wills, scribal influence negates the testatrix's self-presentation, by demonstrating the extent to which Lucy's will accords with the sentiments expressed elsewhere and suggest that, whilst other women may not have produced the corroborative physical examples that Lucy did, their wills still form part of a silent and unseen web of texts – oral, pysical and written – which may be absent from the archive, but which nonetheless contributed to their individual campaigns of self-fashioning.

"Portrait of Lucy, Lady Reynell of Ford".[3]

Lucy Reynell, born in 1577, was the daughter of Robert Brandon, a London goldsmith and jeweller to Queen Elizabeth I.[4] In 1600, Lucy married Richard Reynell, the third son of Richard Reynell of East Ogwell, near Newton Abbot. The younger Richard was a lawyer and served as a clerk in the office of the Lord

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[2] David Booy, *Personal Disclosures: An Anthology of Self-writings from the Seventeenth Century* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2002); James Olney, 'Autobiography and the Cultural Women: a Thematic, Historical, and Bibliographical Introduction' in *Autobiography: Essays Theoretical and Critical* ed. by James Olney (Princetown: Princetown University Press, 1980), pp.3-27; Anne Lawrence-Mathers, 'Introduction' in Lawrence-Mathers, A. and Hardman, P. (eds.) *Women and Writing c. 1340- c. 1650.* (York: York University Press, 2010).

[3] Circle of Marcus Gheerhaerdts the younger, *Portrait of Lucy Reynell of Ford, three-quarter-length, in a dark dress with a white lace collar and gold and pearl necklace, holding a fan in her right hand,* Oil on Canvas (c.1561-1653) <http://www.christies.com/lotfinder/Lot/circle-of-marcus-gheerhaerdts-the-younger-c1561-c1653-1948357-details.aspx> [Accessed 28 August 2018].

[4] Mary Wolffe, "Reynell family (*per.* 1540–1735)." *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* online edn., (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) [Accessed 23 October 2017] <http://0www.oxforddnb.com.lib.exeter.ac.uk/view/article/74992>. Betty R. Masters, 'Introduction: The Chamber in the sixteenth century' in *Chamber Accounts of the Sixteenth Century* (London: London Record Society for the Corporation of London, 1984), pp. xxxii-xxxviii *British History Online*. <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/london-record-soc/vol20/xxxii-xxxviii> [Accessed 18 January 2018].

Treasurer's Remembrancer.[5] Of the five Reynell brothers, four were knighted, and, whilst the eldest, Sir Thomas, consolidated his family estate at West Ogwell, Richard purchased Forde House in Newton Abbot, and other property within the parish of Wolborough. This included the rectory to the church, bought in 1610 on the condition that the Reynells pay £6 13s from the Rectory for a "Chaplain celebrating divine Service".[6] Lucy and Richard had two children: a son, John, who died in infancy, and a daughter, Jane, who died in 1633, the same year as her father. Lucy outlived her husband and daughter by nearly twenty years.

Richard and Lucy were each immortalised in a portrait attributed to the circle of Marcus Gheerhaerdts the Younger. When these pictures were sold by Christies they were described respectively as: a "[p]ortrait of Sir Richard Reynell (1553-1633), of Ford, three-quarter-length, in a black doublet and hose and a lace collar and cuffs with identifying inscription 'Sir Richd. Reynell Kt. Of Ford' (lower right) and inscribed 'Lux mea post umbras' (upper left) oil on panel 35 $^{7}/_{8}$ x 25 ¼ in. (90.8 x 64.2 cm.)" and "[p]ortrait of Lucy, Lady Reynell of Ford, three-quarter-length, in a dark dress with a white lace collar and gold and pearl necklaces, holding a fan in her right hand with identifying inscription (upper right) oil on canvas 44 ¼ x 35 in. (112.3 x 89 cm.)".[7] Richard's portrait had an estimated value of between £3,000 and £5,000, and realised £3,525 when it was sold in 2001; in 2000, Lucy's was guided at £15 - £20,000, but sold for £35,250.[8]

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[5] Wolffe, op. cit.

[6] Devon Archives 1508M/0/Moger/104. He further agreed to pay the King £11 9s in rent. In the account book, a slip of paper has been bound within the records of December 1630 which records this: "I pay for the rectory £11 a year, the payment our Lady Day at Michaelmas, the rent I pay the King £3 10s at Michaelmas to the auditors". (Devon Archive 4652M/F/4/4 fo. 26a). This insert, however, is written in Lucy's hand, suggesting that it was written after her husband's death, and has been inserted in the wrong place when the volume was collated and bound. Whilst modern road systems mean a circuitous route from the church to Forde house, the presence still of Coach Road, Forde Park and Forde Road suggests the direct route which must have linked the two places. They are about a mile apart, hence the need for the coach implied by Coach Road.

[7] (after) Marcus Gheerhaerdts the Younger, *Portrait of Sir Richard Reynell (1553-1633), of Ford,* Oil on Canvas (n.d.) < http://www.wikigallery.org/wiki/painting_314518/(after)-Marcus-The-Younger-Gheerhaerdts/Portrait-of-Sir-Richard-Reynell-(1553-1633),-of-Ford> [Accessed 28 August 2018].
Circle of Marcus Gheerhaerdts the Younger, *Portrait of Lucy Reynell of Ford, three-quarter-length, in a dark dress with a white lace collar and gold and pearl necklace, holding a fan in her right hand,* Oil on Canvas (c.1561-1653) <http://www.christies.com/lotfinder/Lot/circle-of-marcus-gheerhaerdts-the-younger-c1561-c1653-1948357-details.aspx> [Accessed 28 August 2018].

[8] <http://www.christies.com/lotfinder/Lot/circle-of-marcus-gheerhaerdts-the-younger-c1561-c1653-3823163-details.aspx/> [Accessed 14 January 2019].

Figure 15. Richard Reynell.

Figure 16. Lucy Reynell.

There is no record of exactly when the portraits were painted. Richard was knighted in 1622, and the inclusion of the inscriptions seems to imply that they post-date this, but it could well be that the titles were actually added at a later point.[9] Equally, the different media of the two – Richard's is oil on panel and Lucy's oil on canvas –suggests that they may have been painted at different times. The Latin motto on Richard's portrait – *Lux mea post umbras* – translates literally as 'my light after the shadows', but could be read more figuratively, as meaning "light, encouragement, help, succor [sic]", or as representing the heavenly bodies.[10] Similarly, as well as being translated as shadows, "umbras" might also refer to notions of pretence and semblance.[11] Read in this way, Richard's picture seems to confirm him as the provider of the spiritual guidance to which Edward Reynell alludes in his account of life and death of his aunt.[12]

The indeterminacy of the date of production is compounded by the lack of certainty over the actual artist. Gheerhaerts the Younger had been popular with the English court, painting Queen Elizabeth I and Anne of Denmark before falling out of favour in 1617.[13] After this, he was confined to fulfilling commissions from the gentry, rather than the court; nevertheless, in choosing him or someone close

[9] Wolffe, n.p.
[10] Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short, *A Latin Dictionary. Founded on Andrew's edition of Freund's Latin dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1879).
[11] Lewis and Short.
[12] Reynell, p.37
[13] Els Vermandere, 'Marcus Gheeraerts' *The Dictionary of Art* ed. by J. Turner (London: Macmillan Publishers Limited, 1996) pp.514-515.

to him, the Reynells associated themselves with other high-born families and with the court as part of their self-fashioning. However, there are differences between Gheerhaerts' attributed portraits and those of Richard and Lucy. Whilst studies of others "conform to the conventions of seventeenth-century portrait painting in which the depiction of richly embroidered clothes decorated with expensive lace was very important", those of the Reynells do not appear to do so.[14] As commissioning a painting was a costly endeavour, sitters were keen to demonstrate their wealth, and this generally meant wearing their best clothes, potentially bought – or hired – specifically for the event, but Lucy's black dress is relatively modest.[15] Nonetheless, this apparent simplicity does not mask her quality. Black fabric was expensive; it was, by the seventeenth-century, the established colour for mourning, but it could also be used to "emphasize particular moral attitudes", indicating sobriety and piety.[16] Clothing could be used as a "social distinguisher" and "through the choice of fabric and fashion, the individual adhered to convention as a marker of the majority and thus displayed group participation and habit".[17] It was, as John Harvey observes, the outer covering of the body which indicated to the world how the wearer wanted to be seen, publicly displaying the self with which they wished to be associated.[18] Thus, whilst the choice of artist situated Lucy and Richard alongside the gentility Gheerhaerts painted, their outfits marked them out from their peers; rather than ostentatious displays of wealth and social status, the Reynells wanted to exhibit their restraint and spirituality.

The dress in which Lucy chose to be immortalised seems to confirm Edward Reynell's assertion that she entertained no "vanities of follish Fashions and Wanton *dresses*" and "delighted not in the excess of *Apparell*".[19] However, Reynell also states that his aunt made "clothing of silk and purple" and records that she dressed "her family in scarlet … so that whensoever any came to visit her, they should find her like a Princes in the midst of her maids of honour,

[14] Vermandere, p.514.
[15] Elizabeth Currie, *A cultural history of dress and fashion in the Renaissance* (London: Bloomsbury, 2017), p.157.
[16] Currie, p.31; 83-5.
[17] Beatrix Bastl 'Clothing the Living and the Dead: Memory, Social Identity and Aristocratic Habit in the Early Modern Habsburgh Empire' *Fashion Theory*, 5:4 (2001) 357-388 (p.362).
[18] John Harvey *Men in Black* (London: Blackwell Publishers, 1997), p.14-15.
[19] Reynell, p.36; 12.

triumphing on the throne of the affections of such as were about her".[20] These competing images imply a distinction between Lucy's self-presentation in her transitory, earthly life and how she wished to be seen in an enduring text.[21] This suggests that self-fashioning was not a static idea; women exercised control over how they presented themselves in different contexts, using clothing to create and display personae which were contextually shaped.[22]

Lucy's black dress is accessorised with gold and pearl necklaces. The gold chains reflect Lucy's wealth, but also allude to her father's occupation and position, thus associating her with her birth family.[23] Pearls were a favourite of Elizabeth I, their shape and opalescent colouring being reminiscent of the moon, and by association, with Diana (and the Queen), and had denoted purity from biblical and classical times.[24] The Gospel of Matthew warns of casting "pearls before swine" and the apostle compares the kingdom of heaven to a pearl.[25] Similarly, in Revelation, the gates of heaven are described as "twelve pearls, each of the gates made of a single pearl".[26] Elsewhere in the Bible, however, pearls represent "improper worldliness and even corruption"; women are cautioned against adorning themselves with pearls in 1Timothy 2:9, and the Whore of Babylon wears them in Revelation 17:4.[27] These conflicting ideas mean that pearls were seen as indicators of wealth but also as prone to degradation and, as such, they could symbolise both birth and death, pregnancy and mourning.[28] Within early modern society, the purchase and ownership of pearls

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[20] Reynell, pp.19-20.
[21] Jane Whittle and Elizabeth Griffiths assert that there was an ethos of spending in such a way as to assert one's status, and Lucy's choice of black would appear to conform to this idea (Jane Whittle and Elizabeth Griffiths, *Consumption and Gender in the Early Seventeenth-Century Household: The World of Alice Le Strange* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012) p.14). Bastil also notes that there was "undoubtedly also some pressure to dress appropriately to one's status" (p.362).
[22] Bastl, p.374.
[23] Robert Brandon served as chamberlain between 1583 and his death in 1591. During this time, there were concerns about the accounts and the city's finances, but rumours of wrong-doing were refuted by Brandon in his will, of which Lucy, then a minor, was one of the executors (Masters, pp.xxxii-xxxviii. Lucy received half her father's property in the will, as the only one of his daughters who had not married, according to the custom of London. There is no mention of any personal possessions (Masters.).
[24] Karen Raber, 'Chains of Pearls: Gender, Property, Identity' in *Ornamentalism: The Art of Renaissance Accessories* ed. by Bella Mirabella (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, 2011), p.159.
[25] Matthew 7:6; "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it" (Matthew 13:45-46).
[26] Revelation, 21:21.
[27] Raber, p.160.
[28] Raber, p.163.

involved women "in a web of desires, competition for power, dynastic plots and so on" and, as such, Lucy's necklace situates her within a particular group of people.[29] However, alongside this material and consumerist view of pearl ownership, the stones could also be read as representing the merits of the woman. Karen Raber reads Diana Primrose's 1630 *A Chain of Pearle* which memorialises Elizabeth I through the conceit of a string of virtues, strung together like pearls, as the literary representation of these endeavours, each pearl representing a traditional female quality.[30] Seen in this light, Lucy's necklace might be both a reflection of her virtue and an acknowledgement of her imperfections as well as the extent to which remaining virtues required work and careful maintenance.[31] Thus, in choosing to wear pearls, Lucy sought to both demonstrate her status and display her humility.

The gold chain is mirrored by the gold embroidery on the sleeves of the dress. As Jane Whittle and Elizabeth Griffiths point out, embroidery was an activity associated with gentlewomen and served as "an important creative outlet for high-status women".[32] Although, as Edward Reynell notes, Lucy made clothes for the poor, there is no reference to her being engaged in embroidery itself, but the presence of it on the dress reflects her ability to afford it.[33] The lace around the neckline highlights Lucy's face, drawing the eye to it, whilst that at the end of the sleeves focuses attention on her hands, indicating Lucy's lack of involvement in manual labour. Lace was an expensive commodity and the purchase of it was significant enough that it was recorded separately in the Reynells' household accounts: 21s 4d was spent on lace in Exeter in December 1627; 11d on three yards of quarter lace in July 1628; a shilling on galoon lace in August 1628; 1s 5d on lace and silk in October 1629; 6d on lace in September 1630.[34] After Richard's death, Lucy spent 15 shillings on silver lace to bind a

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[29] Raber, p.173.
[30] Diana Primrose, *A chaine of pearle. Or A memorial of the peerless graces, and heroic vertues of Queene Elizabeth, of glorious memory. Composed by the noble lady, Diana Primrose* (London: Thomas Paine, 1630).
[31] Raber, p.171.
[32] Whittle and Griffiths, p.71. Hester Powell of Tewkesbury left, as part of her bequests "my best strawberry wrought cushions and cupboard cloth"; whilst she does not overtly claim who "wrought" them, it is likely that they were her own work (TNA PROB11/301/124).
[33] Wolffe does note, however, that Lucy undertook tapestry.
[34] Todd Gray, *Devon Household Accounts, 1627-59. Part I, Sir Richard ad Lady Lucy Reynell of Forde, 1627-48, John Willoughby of Leyhill, 1644-6 and Sir Edward Wise of Sydenham, 1656-9* (Exeter: Devon and Cornwall Record Society, 1995) pp.5, 20, 24,54, 74. Galoon was "a kind of narrow, close-woven ribbon or braid, of gold, silver or silk thread, used for trimming articles of

green mohair petticoat.[35] The use of lace on Lucy's dress may be unpretentious, but its presence served to acknowledge her wealth and position.

These portraits were commissioned by the Reynells and were designed as artefacts of self-fashioning. As such, they cannot be read as straightforward physical representations of the couple. Rather, they are constructed reflections, not only of Richard and Lucy's physical selves, but also of their characters and quality, which negotiate a path between demonstrating their piety and sobriety whilst simultaneously conforming to expectations of their social standing. As with wills, there is a degree of 'scribal' influence, but the Reynells' choice of artist was designed to reflect their qualities and the way in which they are depicted is carefully choreographed. Lucy's picture captures a fixed point in time, preserving a version of herself which she had fashioned, and which hung alongside her living, clothed body. The painted image of Lucy was static; the version offered by Edward Reynell in his account of her life and death (discussed below), in the colourful clothes hinted at by the entries in the account book, was mutable and context-dependent. Reynell's description of how his aunt dressed when in company implies the adoption of a persona, the donning of a costume, whilst the portrait represents Lucy's true and immutable inner self, constant and unaffected by her outward appearance and these two texts, these two versions of Lucy, co-existed.

The "religious and virtuous Lady, the Lady Lucie Reynell of Ford in Devon".[36]

It is the portrait image of a virtuous and pious woman which is reflected encomiastically by Lucy's nephew, Edward Reynell, in *The religious and virtuous Lady, the Lady Lucie Reynell of Ford in Devon* which was published two years after her death and an exploration of Lucy's character, as described by Reynell, allows us to compare his presentation of his aunt with her self-presentation in her will. Whilst Reynell's account was not a funeral sermon – that, he records, was

apparel" ("galloon, n." *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017) <http:// www.oed.com/view/Entry/76344> [Accessed 16 January 2018]).

[35] Gray, *Devon Household Accounts,* p.108.

[36] Reynell, title page. Edward Reynell was the son of Sir Thomas Reynell of East Ogwell and a Church of England clergyman (Stephen Wright, "Reynell, Edward (1611/12–1663)." *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* online edn., (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) [Accessed 30 October 2017].

preached by the Reverend Doctor William Peterson, Dean of Exeter – it rehearses the same ideas that can be seen in funeral sermons written for other women.[37] In common with the sermonisers discussed in chapter two, Reynell protests his deference and argues that he is barely qualified to write. His sentiments would, he says, be "handsomer (and in a *better dress*) from some other *hand*" and "though it prove not as good as might be expected yet the end and intention thereof was good, and the Authors ayme only for the glory of GOD and the benefit of those who shall meet with it".[38] This acknowledgement deflects potential accusations of flattery; in deprecating himself and, at the same time, apologising for perceived shortcomings in his account of her life, Reynell is able to enhance the reputation of his subject. By abasing himself, he creates a greater distance between him and Lucy, thus elevating his aunt, imbuing her with qualities which transcend him, and creates a persona whose piety and religiosity were beyond that of even a man of god. He goes further, suggesting that he has, perhaps, understated her qualities; in any case, his efforts are for the "glory of GOD" who will judge both his words, and his aunt.

The text is subtitled with three proverbs which encapsulate its theme:

> Favour is deceitfull and Beautie is vaine: but a Woman that feareth the Lord she shall be praised (Prov 31.30); Who can find a virtuous woman? For her price is farre above Rubies (Prov 31/10); Many Daughters have done virtuously, but thou excellest them all (Prov 31.29).[39]

Even before Reynell has written a word about Lucy, it is clear that his focus is her religious virtue. Her life was "spotless" and dedicated to God; she was of a peaceable disposition, was meek, did no one wrong and was to be seen as an example and "cordiall" to everyone else, comforting and exhilarating.[40] These traits had started with her godly upbringing, which meant that she came "earley into the Lords Vineyeard", choosing prayer, reading, meditation and religious

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[37] Reynell, p.47. See the discussion of funeral sermons in chapter two. William Peterson succeeded Matthew Sutcliffe as Dean of Exeter in 1629 and served until his death in 1661 (George Oliver, *The History of Exeter* (Exeter: R. Cullum, 1821), p.x). During the "usurpation", he was maintained by Sir William Courtenay at Powderham castle, which suggests a personal link between him and Lucy (Alexander Jenkins *The History and Description of the City of Exeter: And its Environs, Ancient and Modern, Civil and Ecclesiastical* (Exeter: P. Hedgeland, 1806), p.165.

[38] Reynell, 'Dedication' A2v; To the Reader A7v.

[39] Reynell, title page.

[40] Reynell, 'To the Reader' A6v; p.6; 'coridal, adj. and n.', *Oxford English Dictionary Online* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018) < www.oed.com/view/Entry/41449> [Accessed 11 September 2018].

duties over the "vanities of foolish Fashions and wanton *dresses*", as illustrated by her portrait.[41] During her marriage, the role of spiritual guide had passed to her husband who "had for many yeares before showen *her* the way", and these qualities had been redoubled during her widowhood which she had spent "(like St. Paul's *Matron*) a Scripture *Vestall*".[42]

Reynell's association of his aunt with "St Paul's *Matron*" is designed to demonstrate Lucy's adherence to the ideals of widowhood. Widows were a challenge to early modern society, and the subject of numerous advice books, such as those by Desiderius Erasmus, Juan Luis Vives and François de Sales which sought to control them.[43] These writers' advice was based on "legal codes and biblical stories as well as the worrisome examples of vice and profligacy feared by legislators and magistrates".[44] On the one hand, widows enjoyed a distinct legal and social status, allowing them greater independence than other women; on the other, without a husband to support them, widows were likely to be a drain on a society which would be required to provide for them.[45] They were also seen simultaneously as either "paragons of wisdom and virtue or as hopelessly corrupt or helplessly stupid"; as either John Webster's 'virtuous' widows or his 'ordinary' ones.[46] In the former guise, widowhood was seen as a

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[41] Reynell, p.10; p.36. The reference to her upbringing also serves to contribute to the refutation of challenges lodged against Robert Brandon.

[42] Reynell, p.37. I Corinthians 7:8 states "I say therefore to the unmarried and widows: it is good for them if they abide even as I". Reynell echoes these ideas in the dedication to his *Celestial Amities, or, A Soul Sighing for the Love of her Saviour* (London, 1660), which he dedicates to "the ladies of our times", singling out those "that consume your precious time in painting, powdering, perfuming and adorning yourselves … who complain if the least beam pierce through a little hole of your fan, or if a fly chance to light upon it, you (who if a hair be but amis) presently call a council for the reforming thereof" (A3).

[43] Desiderius Erasmus, (trans. J. Tolbert Roberts) 'On the Christian Widow: De vidua chistiana' in *Collected Works of Erasmus* Vol. 66 ed. by J.W. O'Malley, (Toronto, Buffalo, London: University of Toronto Press, 1988) pp.177-257; Juan Vives, (trans. Richard Hyrde) *A Very Fruteful and Pleasant Boke Callyd the Instruction of a Christen Woman* (London: 1541); Francois de Sales, *Introduction à la vie dévoté* (Fourcalquier: Morel, 1963). For a discussion of these ideas, see Kathleen M. Llewellyn, 'Words to the Wise: Reappropriating the Widow in Early Modern Didactic Literature'. *Parergon* Volume 21, Number I. (2004) 39-63.

[44] Sandra Cavallo, and Lynda Warner, *Widowhood in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (New York: Pearson Education Ltd., 1999) p.6).

[45] Kathleen M. Llewellyn, 'Words to the Wise: Reappropriating the Widow in Early Modern Didactic Literature'. *Parergon* Volume 21, Number I. (2004) 39-63.

[46] Kathleen Llewellyn, p.40. As Margaret Kidnie observes, "[w]idows in early modern drama are typically presented as headstrong and sexually lewd … a stock characterization that articulates anxieties about the unique independence of their real-life counterparts in English society" (*The Taming of the Shrew* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), n.p.); Thomas Overbury *His Wife. With additions of new Characters, and many other wittie conceits neuer before printed* (Lonodn: Robert Allot, 1628), pp.L3-L5.

metaphor for "the Protestant salvation experience".[47] William Page, in his treatise *Widdowe Indeed,* argues that a widow, suffering the desolation and desperation of loss, would be "closest to achieving the triumph of salvation".[48] In following Christian tenets, but under the restraints and hardships of widowhood, a woman had the opportunity to demonstrate her patience and forbearance and thus her qualification for redemption. This is the version of the widow which was the subject of funeral sermons, as discussed in chapter two, and to which Lucy conforms.

Like many other widows, including Mary Sidney and Ellenor Evelyn, Lucy is praised for the way in which she discharged her domestic duties.[49] She was a good landlady, was careful and pious in family duties, sparing in unnecessary correction, and concerned for the health of her servants "especially towards the salvation of their *Souls*".[50] Her religious duty meant that "[s]he had still (with those *Women* the *Apostle* Commends) a Church in *her* House, her Weekday *Temple* a consecrated *Closet*", and made "*her house* (wherein she was the heart) a *Conclave* for *Religious* Worship; a Gracious *soul* consecrating all places into a *Chappell*".[51] Her observance was not only at church: she was engaged in "seconding publique Ordinances, with private Devotion and seeking her God in secret".[52] Despite entertaining persons of quality, Lucy adhered to her habits of prayer and contemplation, not allowing civil entertainments to encroach on religious observance and duty, but keeping the Lord's Day and times of public and private fasts and days of humiliation, reading the Bible and other books "such as tended to *Mortification*".[53]

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[47] Barbara J. Todd, 'The virtuous widow in Protestant England' in *Widowhood in Medieval and Early Modern Europe* ed. by Sandra Cavello and Lynda Warner (New York: Pearson Education Ltd., 1999) pp.66-83. Todd offers a detailed description of Page's treatise, which is held at the Bodleian Library, Oxford (MS Bodl. 115).
[48] Todd, p.71.
[49] See chapter two for a discussion of women's demonstration of their domestic duties on their deathbed.
[50] Reynell, pp.27; 28; 29; 32; 33.
[51] Reynell, p.21; 20.
[52] Reynell, A3v.
[53] Reynell, p.22-23. The Reynells welcomed King Charles I to Forde Park in 1625 and Oliver Cromwell stayed there during the Civil Wars (Todd Gray, *Remarkable Women of Devon* (Exeter: The Mint Press, 2009) pp.20-21). Despite what Reynell says about Lucy's willingness to eschew the material comforts of life, the account book records not only lavish banquets provided for the visits by Charles, but also the purchase of luxury fabrics and laces for Lucy's clothes (Gray, *Household Accounts* pp.20-21; 108).

The domestication of the religious activities of women, such as meditation and private closeted study, conform to male expectations of female chastity and behaviour, but Reynell's account of his aunt's devotion celebrates not only Lucy's intimate and individual observance, but also her wider ministry.[54] She welcomed into her home "*[m]inisters* of CHRIST, to whom *she* was ever a *Friend*" and offered them "*[s]piritual* help and refreshment", but he notes her own more direct intercession:

> [a]nd though *St. Paul* forbids her *Sex* to preach (and *this Lady* was this *way wise* to Sobriety) yet (*with Priscilla and Aquila*) she tooke all fit occasions, both in her health, and sickness, and in those sad fits of *Temptation*, and *Desertion* wherewith *she* was afflicted, to instruct those that were under *her* in the ways of *God*; directing, strengthening and exhorting them, by her many *Gracious experiences*.[55]

Reynell acknowledges St. Paul's injunction against women preachers, but, by positioning Lucy with Priscilla, he is able to defend her instruction of others.[56] Priscilla worked alongside her husband and St. Paul; her example justifies Lucy's actions, but also places them within the control of men – her father, her husband and the ministers who frequented the house. John Dod and Robert Cleaver, in *A godly form of household government for the ordering of private families,* separate wives into those who are "wise and religious" and those who are "foolish and irreligious".[57] Lucy is positioned firmly in the first camp and Edward's focus on her guided mission allows her to both conform to the feminine ideal of religious observance and, at the same time, be celebrated for her wider ministry, in the same way that Mary Sidney was by Edward Molyneux.[58]

This combination of private devotions and concern for the spiritual well-being of others is presented by Reynell as the defining characteristic of his pious

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[54] Femke Molekamp, 'Seventeenth-century Funeral Sermons and the Exemplary Female Devotion: Gendered Spaces and History' *Renaissance & Reformation/Renaissance Et Reforme* 35. 1 (2012) 43-58.
[55] Edward Reynell, p.14; 6.
[56] 1 Corinthians 14:34-35.
[57] John Dod, and Richard Cleaver, *A godly form of household government for the ordering of private families, according to the direction of Gods word* (London. 1621), p.L2r.
[58] Richard Polwhele records, in 1806, that he had seen a sermon, preached by Brezaleel Burt, minister of Landulph, Cornwall in 1642. The lendee, one Mr. Hugo's, assessment of it is that "[t]hough there is a quaintness both in the language and in the sentiment, a spirit of piety breathes through the whole discourse, which greatly recommends it. It is dedicated to the right worshipful and virtuous lady the lady Reynel, wife unto the right worshipful Sir. Richard Reynell, of Ford, in Devonshire, Knt. deceased" to whom "Bezaleel Burt wisheth the comforts of earth and joys of Heaven" (Richard Polwhele *The Civil and Military History of Cornwall; with Illustrations from Devonshire* (London: Cadell and Davies, 1806)); Edward Molyneux 'Mary Sidney' in Raphael Holinshed, *The first and second volumes of Chronicles* (London: Henry Denham, 1587), p.1455.

aunt. She was, he says, an "Elect Lady", although she did not take this election for granted, but was "alwaies striving to make her *Calling* and *Election* sure".[59] The designation 'elect lady' appears in 2 John 1-13: "The elder unto the elect lady and her children, whom I love in truth; and not I only, but also all they that have known the truth". Reynell's use of the epithet 'elect' not only establishes Lucy's credentials as a chosen one, but also suggests a wider acceptance of her as such, despite, or perhaps because of, her professed anxiety about it.[60] In aligning Lucy with the "elect lady", Reynell is therefore able to demonstrate that her selection was evident to those around her, even if she herself questioned it. The term elect was commonly used amongst puritans, and Calvinists in particular, and so may also indicate her religious beliefs, especially when taken in conjunction with Reynell's assertion that she "would not make new *Friends* by changing *her old Religion*", and that she "warily avoided *Superfstition* [sic] on the one Side and *Faction* on the other".[61] Lucy was secure in her beliefs, and Reynell positions her as steadfastly rejecting both superstitious Catholicism and changing Protestant sects. Thus, her faith is depicted as reasonable, reformed and stable, conforming, established and unshakeable and her example all the worthier as a result.

Reynell's text, again as in funeral sermons, includes a description of his aunt's death, and emphasises her preparedness and concomitant qualification for salvation. According to Reynell, Lucy eschewed worldly goods, and gave charitably; some of these gifts are recorded in the household accounts kept by Richard and Lucy. These occurred during Richard's life – "given to a poor woman 6d" in June 1628; "given to an old man 1s" in October 1628; "poor women 3d" in March 1630; "the poor people given 38s 10d" at Christmas 1629(30); "given the poor 13s 8d" April 1631; "given the poor 30s" at Christmas 1631 – and, in December 1631 a specific donation was recorded "from my Lady more for the poor 7s".[62] No others are specifically attributed to Lucy, although it may be that she made gifts from her own allowance which were not noted in the household

[59] Reynell, p.34.
[60] Lucy's salvation anxiety as desirable demeanour will be discussed further below.
[61] Edward Reynell, p.26. These ideas are also congruent with ideas contained in Reynell's *An advice against libertinism, shewing the great danger thereof, and exhorting all to zeal of the truth* of 1659 (Wright).
[62] Devon Archive 4652M/F/4/4; Gray, *Devon Household Accounts,* pp.16, 29, 61, 83, 88, 104, 105.

accounts.[63] Nonetheless, Reynell claims extensive charity on behalf of Lucy who, he asserts, had "laid most of *her* temporall *goods* under the feet of her *Saviour*" and gave to the poor, "*her* Bounty (especially) reflecting on those that were Old and unable to work, or *very Young* and unfit for it".[64] Nor was her charity restricted to money, and Reynell records that she made garments for the poor and needy – probably refashioning old, worn clothes rather than buying low quality linen to make new ones – thus using traditionally female activities for the benefit of others.[65]

Lucy's beneficence is most clearly demonstrated in the four almshouses which she endowed in 1640 for the use of the widows of clergy.[66] In establishing these during her life, Lucy's charity is similar to that of Elizabeth Paige, as discussed in chapter two. In her will, Elizabeth leaves instructions for the building and furnishing of a second alms house, the sister to the one which she had already founded and mandates that her executor be responsible for placing people in it and ejecting them from it as necessary.[67] The presence of a published charter, however, places Lucy's instructions on a legal and authorised footing. In this, she stipulates:

> That 4 wyddows, of y^{e} age of 50 yeeres at y^{e} least, shall from age to age inhabit & enjoy the 4 seuerall houses; That they shalbee the wyddows of preaching ministers, inhabitants within y^{e} county of Deuon or city of exon; And That in defect of such wyddows, to bee found, then y^{e} wyddow or wyddows of some honest poore men of godly lyef & ciuell conversation; That y^{e} said wyddows there placed shalbe such as shalt three dayes in euery weeke frequent y^{e} church & deuine seruice and shalbee noe gadders gossuppers tattlers tale bearrers nor giuen to reprochfull words nor abusers of anye; That none of them keepe aboue one seruant maide to attend them and that noe man bee lodged in any of y^{e} said houses, nor any beare ale wyne or tobacco bee sould in any of y^{e} said houses. That upon death of any of them another bee placed in her room soe dieing by y^{e} said lady with y^{e} consent of y^{e} gentlemen of y^{e} ffeoffees trusted by y^{e} said lady that if any wyddow or wyddows there placed shall abuse them selues or y^{e} charitable intention of y^{e} said lady, then such shalbe expelled putt out & remoued & one other putt into her place, That euery of y^{e} said wyddows behauing her selfe farely well & godlily, shal haue her habitation free and 25 shillings att euery quarters end in euery yeare yearely during her

[63] Whittle and Griffiths note that Alice Le Strange's purchases of clothes were probably made from these monies, which is why they are not recorded in the household accounts (Jane Whittle and Elizabeth Griffiths, *Consumption and Gender in the Early Seventeenth-Century Household: The World of Alice Le Strange* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012)). Similarly, people of the Reynells' standing did not focus on providing charity, instead concentrating of providing work and contributing to the local economy.
[64] Reynell, p.17-18.
[65] Reynell, p.20.
[66] It may be to these houses that Lucy's entry in the accounts refers: "1638 April the 16. Delivered George Trosse to pay for my new coach and other things one hundred pounds and twenty pounds he had afore to pay for timber and stones for ~~my~~ my new house" (Gray, *Household Accounts* p. 108). The use of the possessive 'my', rather than 'the' echoes the direct involvement that she had in the charity.
[67] TNA PROB11/266/167.

lyef: and prouision is made that none of them bee chargable to this parrish att any time from hereafter according to y^e^ conueyance of y^e^ said ladye: made & bearing date the 5 day of march 1640. That none of y^e^ said wyddows departe from or leaue their said house or houses by the space of one moneth togeather without the leaue and consent of the said lady or two of the trustees att y^e^ least upon payne of forfeiture of their houses & their yearely paye

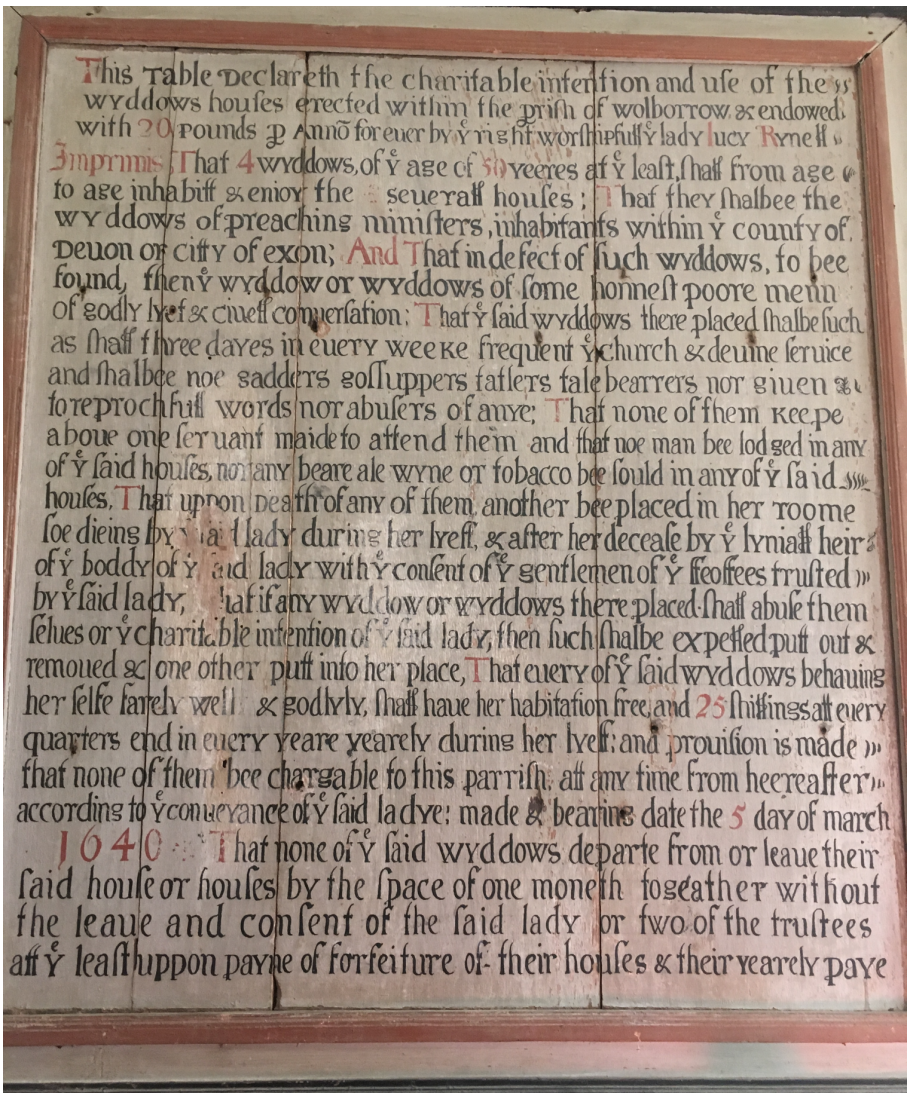

Figure 17. The charter for Lucy Reynell's almshouses. [68]

This contract is prefaced with:

> This Table Declareth the charitable intention and use of the wyddows houses erected within the prish of wolborrow & endowed with 20 pounds P Anno for euer by y^e^ right worshipfull y^e^ lady lucy Ryell (sic).

[68] The tablet is currently housed in the vestry of St. Mary's Church, Wolborough, Newton Abbot. The almshouses were renovated in Victorian times, and one was later divided into two flats, but they and the charity still exist, although not as the sole province of the widows of ministers ('Lady Lucie Reynell's Charity *Registered charities in England and Wales* <http://beta.charitycommission.gov.uk/charity-details/?regid=262114&subid=0> [Accessed 28 August 2018]).

Lucy's prerequisites reflect her own religious beliefs, as testified by her nephew. In making provision for the widows of ministers, she confirms her commitment to the preachers whom she had befriended but is uncompromising in her expectations of the widows' behaviour. Her charity is generous, but it is not unconditional, and she expects her tenants to adhere to a strict code of conduct in return for it. Nor did Lucy's control end at the actual establishment of the almshouses. The appointment of "gentlemen of y^{e} ffeoffees" and the third person references to her as "y^{e} said lady" do not diminish her agency. Whilst the women would be "placed" there by person or persons unspecified, at their death "another [would] bee placed in her room soe dieing by y^{e} said lady", and it is she, or two of the trustees, who must consent to the women leaving their accommodation for more than a month. Similarly, it is implied that it is at Lucy's discretion that anyone misbehaving should be removed. It is her "charitable intention" that would be challenged by such behaviour and, presumably, her decision as to what constituted a woman "behauing her selfe farely well & godly". However, whilst the widows could be replaced because of death or misconduct, no mention is made of a replacement for Lucy. The widows would live in the houses "from age to age"; Lucy's death would mean an end to her own physical involvement, but the charter would perpetuate her name and ensure that she continued to be present, even after her death.

This deed is a legal instrument and is distinguished as such by features such as the synonymous repetition of "expelled putt out & removed".[69] The language commodifies the women and sets Lucy's arbitration on a legitimate footing, consolidating her formal control. The official tone is also reflected in the "payne of forfeiture" threatened should the widows break the terms of their contract. This was a public document, written on a board and displayed and the way in which Lucy is represented in it was carefully designed to establish and maintain her charitable credentials and the power which she assumed for herself through them. There is no way of knowing if Lucy penned this charter herself or

[69] In Medieval legal language, triplets of words with a similar meaning from French, Latin and English were used to ensure that no ambiguity was possible. Here, expel comes from Latin, remove from French and put out from English, thus giving the phrase a legal feel ("expel, v." *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017) <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/66497> [Accessed 23 October 2017]); "remove, v." *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017) <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/162313> [Accessed 23 October 2017]; "put, v." *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017) <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/155188> [Accessed 23 October 2017]).

employed someone to do it for her. The legal language suggests that, like wills, it may have been a collaborative co-creation, but, given that Richard was a lawyer, it is possible that she may have been familiar with legal discourse and the formulation of contracts. In any case, I would argue that Lucy 'wrote' this text. The instigation of it was hers and so were the ideas contained in it and this constitutes her as the intentional author of it, and it as an example of women's writing.

Lucy's charity was indisputable, but she ensured that she was acknowledged as its instigator and that it was legally valid and binding. Her establishment of the widows' houses demonstrates her commitment to biblical tenets of charity and offers a practical representation of her beliefs whilst also embodying a desire to exert control over social religious practices. As head of the household, Lucy would have taken responsibility for the religious adherence of the people who lived and worked with her (something to which Reynell attests); in establishing these almshouses she extended the reaches of this household to the wider community, echoing Reynell's presentation of her as a preacher. Her choice of widows as recipients of her charity reflected her own widowed condition, but also invoked biblical teachings on the position of widows and the ways in which they should be treated; her stipulation that they be ministers' widows who were required to clearly rehearse their faith and continence provided a pattern for other widowed women and thus an enduring example, one which Lucy had herself followed and, indeed, through the charter for the houses, had set.

The conditions in this contract cast the women who were to live in the almshouses as sober, God-fearing and moderate, qualities with which Lucy wished to be associated. Through this characterisation, she projected an image of herself to which she required the widows to conform and this example is reflected in the account of her death which Reynell provides. Lucy was, he avows, aware of both the certainty and unpredictability of death and had "spent the time of her health well, laying up *Teares*, and *Prayers* before-hand, and desiring GOD *to* teach *her* how to number her dayes aright".[70] She had suffered bouts of sickness once or twice a year for some years before her death, as well as seeing death around her, and had used these experiences to prepare for her own end: "*she* got acquaintance with death and became familiar with it, taking notice of all

[70] Reynell, p.40.

its approaches, by considering the dissolution of others". The language here personifies death, ascribing to it a calculated agency and crediting his aunt with a close relationship with it, meaning that, at the end:

> the sight of Death, was neither strange, nor terrible to her when it came, having so often (formerly) beheld it in *her* serious meditation and having (as it were) by *her Grave* in her house (her *Coffin* lying by her many years before *she* dyed) as if all the dayes of her Pilgrimage *she* studied to wait when her *change* should come.[71]

That she had "beheld", "studied" and "waited" demonstrates the insight which she assumed through her religious meditation, coming to see her life as a pilgrimage and her death as merely a "change", thus diminishing its impact. As she had got to know death, it had lost its threat and become something to be accepted and welcomed. With each illness she "raised her thoughts a step higher above all that is Earthly, shaking off her sinfull Fetters, and every day bidding farewell to those poor Cottages of earthly delights", progressively separating herself from the worldly life.[72] Her gradual sloughing off of her mortal body – one of the "poor Cottages" – was matched by an increasing spiritual resolve: "as the [sic] lost ground in the strength of *her* body, she still gained it in the force and vigour of *her* Soul".[73] This is also reflected in the notion that she had "her *Coffin* lying by her many years before *she* dyed", an action which is reminiscent of John Donne's commission of a portrait in his winding sheet painted some time before his death.[74] In both cases, living with physical reminders of their inevitable end illustrates salvation anxiety but, this in itself, as Ryan Netzley notes in relation to Donne's divine poetry, represented "the very devotional disposition[s] that one should desire".[75] In order to achieve salvation it was necessary to live in and articulate a state of disquiet about it; whilst Lucy's display was perhaps more 'domestic' and calmer than Donne's and possibly reflected the gender and status differences between them, the action, and Reynell's references to his aunt's lack

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[71] Reynell, p.41; 42. "acquaintance, n." *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018) <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/1707> [Accessed 19 January 2018].
[72] Reynell, p.49.
[73] Reynell, p.50; "cottage, n." *OED Online* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, December 2018) <www.oed.com/view/Entry/42456> [Accessed 14 January 2019].
[74] Clare Gittings and Peter Jupp *Death in England: An Illustrated History* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999) p.168.
[75] Ryan Netzley *Reading, Desire, and the Eucharist in Early Modern Religious Poetry* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011), p.106.

of assurance of election, nonetheless demonstrate her observance of expected attitudes.

By the time of her final sickness, "she had set her house in order, and … ordered her goods and estate as was thought convenient by her".[76] These acts confirm Lucy's agency in her final preparations and her exercise of duty to the "them" that she "put[s] in remembrance of her Departure" reflects the same spiritual responsibility to her household as the establishment of a church in her house had in life, casting them as participants in her performance of death and affirming her implementation of her domestic duties.[77] Like John Ley's funeral sermon for Jane Ratcliffe and that of William Fuller for Frances Clifton, as well as the accounts of women's good deaths discussed in chapter three, Reynell draws particular attention to Lucy's judicious use of speech on the deathbed. In life, she observed "a mediocrity in *her* words", using her discourse to "direct, quicken and comfort those that heard *her*", exhibiting "no such Purulent spittle, as might argue exulcerated Lungs" and uttering only "pious *Eiaculations*".[78] Indeed, her charter for her almshouses specifically forbids intemperate or immoderate speech acts – the occupants "shalbee noe gadders gossuppers tattlers tale bearrers nor giuen to reprochfull words nor abusers of anye" – and these actions are ranked alongside drinking as undesirable. However, when her voice fails at the end, Lucy, like Frances Clifton and Thomazine Halswell of Wells, has to find other ways of 'articulating' her intentions:[79]

> she spake with her *Heart*; her Prayers were turn'd into inward *Soliloquies* betwixt God and her Soul which yet wanted not outward expressions by Sights, Teares, lifting up of Hands and Eyes, whereby … *she* recommended her self to him.[80]

The notion of "inward *Soliloquies*" transforms Lucy's unheard words into a performance, but the idea that they were dialogic – "betwixt God and her Soul" – is oxymoronic. Whereas Ford uses oxymorons to emphasise Penthea's impotence, Reynell's evocation of a dialogic soliloquy serves to establish a parity

[76] Reynell, p.53.
[77] See chapter three for discussion of the expectations with regard to women's spiritual ministry within the household.
[78] John Ley, *A Patterne of Pietie. Or the Religious Life and Death of That Grave and Gracious Matron, Mrs. Jane Ratcliffe, Widow and Citizen of Chester* (London: Printed by Felix Kingston for Robert Bostocke, 1640); William Fuller, *The Mourning of Mount Libanon: Or, The Temples Teares* (London: Printed by Thomas Harper for Robert Bostock, 1628); Edward Reynell pp.23-4.
[79] TNA PROB11/152/522.
[80] Reynell, pp.53-4.

between his aunt and God as they communicated silently, the only indication of the exchange being the sighs, tears and gestures which Lucy displayed, and which gestures confirmed the validity of the unvocalised sentiments Reynell attributes to her. Finally, she said "Amen to her own death" and, when she died, "such tranquillity of mind she then had, and so exhilarated was her heart … that … she felt a marvellous strengthening and quietness within her insomuch those Bones (formerly bruised) they lea't for joy", a reference to Ezekiel 37:1-14 and to her expected resurrection, which is also invoked in her will.[81]

There is no way of knowing whether Edward Reynell was actually present at his aunt's death, but, as with John Evelyn and Alice Thornton's accounts of the deaths of their relatives, how Lucy was presented at this point was important to him.[82] His account rehearses idealised representations of feminine piety and seeks to ensure that Lucy's life and death were presented as advantageously as possible. As such, his narrative combines the tenets of dying well texts with a gendered performance of death; Lucy is credited with representing a female *moriens* whose exemplary death is nonetheless congruent with her sex. She died well, but she died well as a woman. Reynell's explicit intention that her life serve as an example, not only to the granddaughter to whom his tract was dedicated, but also to the wider audience that publishing presumed, was dependent on the spiritual and religious perfection which he attributes to her. Nonetheless, as with funeral sermons and the descriptions of other women's deaths, the representation of Lucy's piety here is male-mediated, and the possibility that recording it was beneficial to Edward Reynell cannot be ignored.[83]

A Consolatory Epilogue for Dejected Souls.

In an inversion of actual funeral sermons which started with an exposition of a biblical tract and then sought to celebrate the example of the deceased in a biographical "lean to", Reynell follows the account of Lucy's life and death with a

[81] Reynell, p.43; 52.
[82] John Evelyn, *The Diary of John Evelyn* ed. by William Bray (London: Dent, 1966); Alice Thornton, *The Life of Mrs Alice Thornton* (Durham: The Surtees Society, 1878). See chapter three for a discussion of the good deaths of women.
[83] Reynell himself was prone to melancholia and he committed suicide in 1663 (Wright).

"consolatory epilogue for Dejected Souls".[84] Like the first part, this begins with three Psalms, but here the message is one of consolation for the broken hearted:

> For I said in my hast, I am cut off from before thine Eyes: Nevertheless thou heardest the voice of my Supplications when I cryed unto thee (Psalm 31. 22)
> The Lord is nigh unto them that are of a broken Heart: And saveth such as are of a contrite Spirit (Psalm 34. 18)
> The Sacrifices of GOD are a broken Spirit: A broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise (Psalm 51. 17)

His avowed intention is that this part should provide:

> ease of such as labour under *spirituall affliction*, and the satisfaction of *those* who may meet with the same distress, and *conflict* of a troubled Conscience (as also by way of caution, and for the removing of such objections as may (possibly) be urg'd by *any* who shall therby think the worse of *her condition*) to represent *her* as the *Pature* of a pious Soul, with its *Vicissitudes* of *comfort* and *Grief*.[85]

At this point, Reynell's text moves away from Lucy's death to her life in order to demonstrate how she had quietly endured the trials sent by God, the better to illustrate her enduring and unshakeable faith. Not only had she suffered the recurring illnesses to which he had already referred, but

> to this was added (there being no perpetuity of Being upon Earth, but a continuall revolution of all sublunary things) the Death of her deare Daughter the Lady *Waller* (a Gentleman whose Worth, and Honour is sufficiently read in his *Name*) who was a *Lady* of great abilities (sanctified with heavenly wisdom) wholly composing her Soul by *Gods word,* and carying about her a *Confluence* of all rarities and perfections (Learning it self, being not only thought usefull but necessary by her. A fruitfull *Branch* was of a gracious *Stock* and needs must the Mother be troubled to lose so neare a part of her Self.
> Shortly after, followed the death of her *Husband* (the greatest of all her Crosses in the world!) and not long after (as if *God* intended to take away all the *props* of her later yeares, to draw her the nearer to himself) he was pleas'd to nip a tender *Bud* of that spreading *Tree* [*her Grand-child*] in whom shined great hopes of her future comfort.[86]

The deaths of her husband and children and grandson belong to this "sublunary" world, the earthly as opposed to the spiritual realm upon which Lucy was focused despite the privations their loss had occasioned her, and her fortitude in bearing these losses is cited as a demonstration of her spiritual strength.[87] Reynell compares her to Job, seeking God, but not finding him, and turning instead to

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[84] Patrick Collinson, "'A Magazine of Religious Patterns' An Erasmian Topic Transposed in English Protestantism" in *Godly People: Essays on English Protestantism and Puritanism* (London: Hambledon, 1983) p.510; Reynell, p.57.
[85] Reynell, pp. 57-58
[86] Reynell, pp.95-6.
[87] "sublunary, adj. and n." *OED Online*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, December 2018) <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/192789> [Accessed 8 January 2019].

"the *Ministers* of Christ, and such other meanes as God was pleas'd to direct *her* to" and recounts the "many and bitter" assaults of Satan upon her.[88] Like Job, she did not blame God for her "*Spirituall desertions*" but "patiently indured them" as a "true signe of her *Predestination",* and happiness.[89] These conferences with ministers were not, however, merely about them comforting her; Reynell argues that the benefit came not to the first who could comfort Lucy, but the first "rather to receive comfort from her, she being of a clear judgement and understanding *Spirituall* things (yet as free from Pride, as Ignorance)", once again emphasising not only her personal belief, but also her facility for ministry.[90] Despite Satan's best endeavours, Reynell assures the reader, Lucy was confident that God "both could, and did still love *her* so long as *she* desired to cherish his presence within her Soul".[91] She acknowledged her sinfulness as the most burdensome affliction of all, regarding other hardships as "poor flea-bitings", compared to Jesus' suffering.[92] Her struggles are presented metaphorically – "when the ship of her Soul seem'd wrack't, then would *she* endeavour to save *her self* upon the Rock of his infinite Mercy; at this Poole of *Bethesda* would *she* still lye" – and the idea of the shipwreck suggests something from which she can only be saved by God.[93] Reynell thus minimises Lucy's sufferings, showing that nothing with which she had been troubled had undermined the foundations of her faith and that, in these sorrows, it had been the hand of God which had soothed her.

The discussion of Lucy in life, following the description of her death means that she exists panchronically in the narrative, as the dead body and as the living woman, and this is reflected in the way in which Reynell appropriates Lucy's voice. Having praised her for the judiciousness of her speech in life and reported her utterances on her deathbed, Reynell now ventriloquises his aunt, using words

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[88] Reynell, pp.61-62. The tradition of ministers in the house was something which Richard had started, and which Lucy continued (pp.96-7). These struggles with Satan can be compared with those described by Philip Stubbes in his account of the death of his wife, Katherine (Philip Stubbes, *A Chrystall Glasse for Christian Women* (London: Printed for Iohn Writght, 1633)).
[89] Reynell, p.67. Rose Nurse of Gloucester also compared herself with "upright Job", and Stephen Denison based his funeral sermon for Elizabeth Juxon on the book of Job (Gloucestershire, England, Wills and Inventories, 1541-1858 (*Ancestry.co.uk*) 203531; Stephen Denison *The monvment or tombstone or a sermon preached at Lavrence Povntes Chvrch in London Nouemb. 21 1619 at the funeral of M^rs^ Elizabeth Iuxon, the late wife of M^r^ Iohn Iuxon* (London: George Miller, 1631).
[90] Reynell, p.72.
[91] Reynell. p.63.
[92] Reynell, p.67.
[93] Reynell, p.63. John 5.2 "Now there is in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate a pool, which in Aramaic is called Bethesda and which is surrounded by five covered colonnades".

that he purports she said as he seeks to reassure the reader of her piety, once again offering speech acts to confirm the record. At times, this amounts to significant passages which relegate Reynell's authorial voice to the role of reporting by-stander. Thus, much of this section is given over to an 'I' which seemingly belongs to Lucy:

> Ah, Lord! I am hell, but thou are Heaven; I am a sinke of Sin, but thou art a gracious God; I am the chief of Sinners, yet (O most sweet, and comfortable saying to my Soul!) such thou camest to seek, and to save, thou art Light, but my Soul is in darkness[94]

The first-person pronouns lend an immediacy and urgency to the text, as 'Lucy' describes her own wretched condition and God's redemptive role in her salvation: "O they are my *sinnes,* they are my *sins* (said she) which have thus occasion'd the *with-drawment* of my Saviour!".[95] However, it is Reynell who introduces the passage: "And with what *Humilitie* of spirit, hath she been often knowne to abase *her* self, as if she had said …".[96] He claims the intentions and meaning as Lucy's, but his use of "as if she had said" allows him to supply the actual words. In doing so, he is able to ensure that the rhetoric that 'Lucy' uses matches the description of her piety and devotion that he has given in the account of her life and death. The inclusion of Lucy's voice alongside Reynell's own mirrors the polyvocal texture of nuncupative wills, such as that of Marie Restrall, where a dialogic quality is created through the scribal framing of the testatrix and others present at the deathbed.[97] In the same way that scribes used the purported words of testatrices in order to confirm the authenticity of their account, so Reynell attributes the words that he uses in order to do the same; the scribes' "these words or the like" are Reynell's "as if she said", both attempting to sanction their account.

The passage quoted above continues with a string of rhetorical questions:

> O what *Bellowes* of disquietness arise within my heart? What sad thoughts do violently assail me? I know not what to do, I know not what to answer! So unworthy am I (not having any thing in me to move Gods affections towards me.) Alas! how unfit am I to performe any *Dutie*? How poor, how liveless how heartless in the performance of them? Yea with what deadness, dullness, distraction and vanity are my best *Actions* accompanied? Oh wat Pride, and stubbornness is within me? How careless am I in injoying communion with GOD? how negligent in trying my own heart? In watching over

[94] Reynell, p.59.
[95] Reynell, p.58.
[96] Reynell, p.58.
[97] Bristol Archive FCW1645.

> my Senses, and mourning in secret for my daily failings? What a *Giant* am I when I fight against my self by my sinnes, but what a *Dwarfe* (yet unable to arise) untill I am let down (through the house-top) to receive CHRIST's *cure*! And will Christ stoop to uphold such a *Worme* as I am, in this low condition?[98]

Earlier in the text, Reynell testifies to Lucy's worthiness and willingness to address her own sinful behaviour through prayer, meditation and fasting; here he uses Lucy's voice to question her ability to do so, once again reflecting her salvation anxiety and displaying the requisite disposition through which to achieve redemption. The apostrophic 'O' added to the layering of rhetorical questions evokes preaching, with which Reynell has already associated Lucy. Having created a crescendo of questions, Lucy then provides the answer: "Yea Lord, thou canst, and doest, and art only able to disperse my cares, and recover my decayed senses" and proceeds to confess the sins of which she has been guilty.[99] Whatever her perceived inadequacies, her questions have led her to the conclusion that, with the help of God, salvation is possible, thus disbursing the anxiety built up in the rhetorical questions.

Through the intercession of ministers, Lucy's spiritual health had been restored and she had found an "abundance of comfort" in God's presence.[100] Now, serried rhetorical questions are used to create a sense of wonder at the "sweetness" of everyday activities – "Reading, Hearing, Praying, Meditating and the like" – and in the "*Promises* of the Gospell".[101] These undertakings were domestic and private, placing Lucy once again within a distinctly feminine ideal of piety and this is mirrored in the switch from the imagery of shipwrecks and of darkness and light which had previously been used to convey her sense of despair and loss to that of food, nourishment and succour: "Her Soul was fill'd even with marrow, and fatness, and her heart ravished with spirituall refreshment" now that "God had sent her *Saviour* to bring her out".[102] The use of the word "ravished" here suggests not only transportation and spiritual enrapture, but also a sense of violence, of something that could not be explained or withstood.[103] Lucy's very core had succumbed to this "spirituall refreshment", having "tasted

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[98] Reynell, p.58
[99] Reynell, p.60.
[100] Reynell, p.72.
[101] Reynell, p.73.
[102] Reynell, p.72.
[103] "ravished, adj." *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017) <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/158685> [Accessed 18 September 2017].

the goodness of *God*"; it had become her "marrow", not something superficial or liable to corruption. God's blessing meant that Lucy's troubles and suffering were even more insignificant as she received, "for a few disconsolate dayes, Moneths and yeares of delight, and comfort in Heaven".[104] Now her suffering is seen as merely "a fatherly correction" and she no longer complains about her lot.[105] Rather, she can reinterpret her suffering in terms of her relationship to and with God: "The heats of her *Afflictions* were but the chafing of the wax, whereby *he* meant to seale her nearer to *himself*; the *spots* of her Infirmities, were but the letters in which he writ his own Name, and conveyed himself unto her".[106]

As well as providing Lucy as an example for others to follow, Reynell uses his consolation to erase any potential criticism of her. As God had forgiven her, he requests that "no one uncharitably remember, they being not of any deep dye (for ought that ever I could heare) or any other then of ordinary weakness, and infirmity".[107] In so doing, Reynell not only asks people to absolve Lucy of any minor indiscretions that might reasonably be attributed to momentary lapses and which had been forgiven by God in any case, but also situates himself as arbiter of her moral conduct. That he had never heard of any transgression that was "other then of ordinary weakness, and infirmity" suggests not only that he was close enough to Lucy to have learned of any such instances, but also that he claims the power and the authority to judge them. As previously noted, Reynell was himself a minister; his association with such a paragon of virtue and piety as his aunt reflected well on him, and, once again, his intervention renders Lucy's piety male-mediated.

Reynell now moves further from the specific example of his aunt to the general lessons that might be taken from her case. Whilst there are still references to Lucy, "she" now serves as the vehicle through which Reynell makes more universal points about faith and how it is achieved and maintained. This is avowedly Reynell's voice, and biblical references litter the margins as he sermonises. Now Lucy is compared to "the Woman of *Canaan*", whose faith sustained her though her prayers went unanswered, thus elevating her.[108] Whilst Lucy's 'voice' returns briefly, it is to underscore the point that Reynell is making,

[104] Reynell, p.73.
[105] Reynell, p.75.
[106] Reynell, p.75.
[107] Reynell, p.78.
[108] Reynell, p.84; Mathew 15:21-28.

and then only with short interjections into his discourse, and it is through "imitation also of this *Lady*" that the reader might learn that "God shewes us the way to *Heaven,* and make *Death* the way to *Life*"; through her actions rather than her words.[109]

Finally, Reynell admits that he "need say no more in her behalf; who well knew, that Gods afflictions were like hot Spices, comfortable to the Stomack, though biting in the mouth; and whensoever she fell into any spirituall slumber, her Soul (with the *Spouse*) still waked".[110] Her privations were difficult to bear, but ultimately beneficial and medicinal. However, it is Lucy's voice which closes his text. At the end, hers was a "meek and quiet surrender of *her Soul*, into the hands of her *Saviour*" and through his strength "all her doubts were conquered, and [she] was (with comfort) able to say, *O Hell! O Satan! Where is your Victory!*", echoing 1 Corinthians 15:55-56, her apostrophising demonstrating a final contempt for Satan and signalling a conviction of triumph.[111]

Edward Reynell's account of his aunt's life is an extended exposition of Lucy's piety and virtue, the same qualities suggested by her portrait. His description of her death adheres to the tenets of dying well texts and echoes the ideas expounded in funeral sermons and deathbed narratives. He confirms the desirability of modest speech, confirms his aunt's preparedness to die and expresses her salvation anxiety. However, there are times when Reynell appears to be making a special case for his aunt. In discussing her suffering, he claims that "[s]urely she (especially) eyed the hand of *God*, which thus kept her from murmuring & made her silent in his presence", suggesting that her ability to eschew complaint and bear her challenges in silence was an exceptional one. Neither was her treatment at God's hands commonplace. Rather, she was "invited (by a more then ordinary way) to draw neare unto God & to know why he contended with her".[112]

Lucy's presence in the text confirms the picture which Reynell paints of her. As in nuncupative wills, Reynell uses Lucy's own words, not only to confirm her intentions but also to advocate the veracity of his observations. Again, the reportage of her speech is mediated, but her voice is still there; like a scribe, Reynell transforms Lucy's oral account into a written one, but it is her voice that

[109] Reynell, p.87.
[110] Reynell, p.94.
[111] Reynell, p.98.
[112] Reynell, p.69.

is preserved on the page. Whereas Lucy's portrait offers a representation of her at a fixed point in time, Reynell's account is diachronic, yet his version of his aunt remains constant, from her meditative upbringing to her idealised widowhood. It can therefore be read alongside other examples of writing about women's deaths. The shared qualities, dispositions and attitudes place Lucy within a pious and virtuous sorority, confirming her active faith, her conformity and her demonstrated worthiness of salvation. However, Reynell's account can also be placed in dialogue with Lucy's portrait, the charter for her almshouses and the monument discussed below, which confirm it as an extension of her self-fashioning.

Lucy Reynell's Monument

The ideas of piety, charity and virtue which were recorded in Reynell's narrative are also reflected in the memorial which Lucy had built in St. Mary's church, Wolborough, Newton Abbot, following Richard's death in 1633, which, I argue, forms part of Lucy's autobiographical endeavour. In their discussion of Anne Clifford's life-writing, Elspeth Graham, Hilary Hinds, Elaine Hobby and Helen Wilcox include, alongside her "assortment of day-by-day books, chronicles, memorials, and diaries" the 'Great Picture' which she commissioned. This painting records Clifford's family and what she saw as her cause – the inheritance of the lands which her father had bequeathed to her uncles – and herself at the several ages of fifteen (the year of her father's death) and fifty-six (the age at which she commissioned the triptych).[113] Lucy's monument similarly serves to preserve and project her own cause: the demonstration of her family fealty and piety. This monument fixes a scene in which Lucy, Richard and their children are preserved in perpetuity within the church; through it, Lucy continues to exist, to be an example to others and to demonstrate her goodness and constancy. It is part of her performance of death, offering a perpetual reminder of its ubiquity, representing her acceptance of it and countering the anonymity occasioned by it.[114]

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[113] Elspeth Graham, Hilary Hinds, Elaine Hobby and Helen Wilcox *Her Own Life: Autobiographical Writings by Seventeenth-century Englishwomen* (London: Routledge, 1989), p.33.

[114] Nigel Llewellyn, *Funeral Monuments in Post-Reformation England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p.37. Llewellyn notes that Devon is "relatively dense in monuments", and that there were tomb-makers working at Exeter in the early 1600s (p.66).

Lucy's significant outlay – in excess of £200 – bought what Christine Faunch describes as a monument "of a rather sophisticated design".[115] Entries made by Lucy in the household accounts record some aspects of the work.[116] Initially, she notes that she had given to "Wellar for carriage of tomb stones £4". Later, she "paid Wellar the tomb man threescore and 9 pounds, he must have ['40' crossed through] forty one pounds more if he performs it well to my likings, else £10 is to be deducted".[117] On the "11 of September Wellar had of me fourscore and ~~£9 6s~~ £8 6s", then she gave "to Mr Wellar's man 25s, given Mr Wellar more £6, for yorne grats for the tombe £20 5s ~~12s 6d~~ weighing 9 hundred pounds 5 ½ d the pound".[118] There is no extant contract between Lucy and Wellar and, whilst the later entries read as a record of her expenditure, the first is almost part of the planning process, as she thought in writing about what she would pay and the conditions upon which she would pay it. Lucy made only sporadic entries into the account book after Richard's death; these summaries of expenditure and the list of bequests left by Richard and signed or initialled by the recipients appear to be evidence of her initial, un-sustained, intention to continue the accounts. However, these entries, along with those that outline other items purchased for Richard's funeral can be seen as part of her memorialisation of Richard, recording his generosity and her expenditure on his burial.[119]

The monument itself comprises a bed on which the recumbent figures of Richard and Lucy lie; beneath them, on a shelf, is the figure of their daughter, Jane, and, on the floor, in a cradle, the infant, John. The canopy over the tomb bed is surmounted by the Reynell coat of arms which combines the argent masonry of the Reynells and the argent and gules barry with rampant lion of the Brandon family, thus symbolising the joining of the two houses. The canopy itself

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[115] Christine Faunch, *Church Monuments and Commemoration in Devon c. 1530-c.1640 Volume 3.* (PhD thesis, University of Exeter, 1998) [Accessed through EThOS 21st June 2017], p. 7.

[116] Devon Archive 4652M/F/4/4; Gray, *Devon Household Accounts,* p.107-8. Whilst Gray identifies two hands at work in the account book, those of Richard Reynell and of his steward, George Trosse, following Richard's death an italic hand is introduced. That it is italic, added to the reference to "my husband's legacy" indicates that it is Lucy who makes these entries. There are, in fact, other hands, as the list of legacies left by Richard Reynell are receipted in the accounts by the recipients, generally with their initials.

[117] Gray *Devon Accounts* p.107.

[118] Gray *Household Accounts*, p.108.

[119] Gray *Household Accounts,* p.105. Lucy records giving "for the poor, and carrying links and candles £7 for 4 torches 16s, for a dozen and half of links 112s £1 8s paid Mr Groudden for 8 yards of fine black cloth £4 01s given Mr Johnson for preaching £2", presumably for Richard's funeral.

is populated with cherubim and, on the wall within the arch, are the figures of Time and Justice, and the stones which bear the epitaphs to the Reynells. Faunch speculates that these stone have been moved at some point, and, certainly, the fact that Lucy's hands partially obscure one of the plates suggests that she is right in thinking that they were originally attached to a backplate, probably positioned differently.[120] The allegorical statues were placed on the wall following significant conservation in 1997 when "[t]wo free standing small figures (time and justice) had been found lying loose on top of the chest. As there was no clear evidence of their original locations these were dowelled onto the chancel wall above the main effigies".[121] It is likely that these figures were originally affixed to the iron grills which Lucy purchased, but which no longer survive.[122]

Figure 18. The Reynell tomb

Figure 19. Canopy of the Reynell tomb

[120] Faunch, p.703. As Nigel Llewellyn points out, tombs were often surrounded by metal grills which displayed heraldry, inscribed texts and allegorical figures (p.79). The account book records the purchase of such grills and it is possible that the figures of Time and Justice, along with the texts might have been displayed on these, rather than on the wall.
[121] Recorded in the report written by Bruce Induni, 9th July 1997, p.13. I am grateful to Paul Hewson, former churchwarden of St. Mary's for his help in this matter. The picture of the figure of Time in Nigel Llewellyn's *Funeral Monuments in Post-Reformation England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000) p.341) looks different to the figure which is on the wall in the church. The angle of the wing is not the same, and the relationship between the figure and the wall suggests that the photo was taken before restoration was undertaken in 1995 and that the figure was place in a different position as part of this work.
[122] Nigel Llewellyn, p.79; Gray *Household Accounts* p.108.

The Reynell monument serves to memorialise the family and, at the same time, act as a *memento mori*, designed to instruct and reassure the society within which it was situated, allowing the family to remain within the church even after their physical presence was impossible. None of the family was buried in the monument; nonetheless, it was important to Lucy to depict the whole family and to do so in a way that emphasised their quality. As Nigel Llewellyn asserts, "[f]uneral monuments were embedded in a rich visual culture within buildings which were the focus of social life"; as such, they served as a constant reminder and lesson to the community.[123] That the Reynell tomb was built before Lucy's death meant that it served as an example and prompt of living and dying well not only to others, but also to Lucy herself. Being faced on a regular basis by effigies of her husband and children offered Lucy the opportunity to remember them; the image of herself, or the space reserved for it helped to remind her that her own death was inevitable.[124] In designing the monument, Lucy created a scene for herself, one in which she would be a player following her death, and which formed part of the rehearsal for it. Equally, its position within the church which she frequented would have allowed her to present herself as the living representation of preparedness to die and, if her image was already included, to exist panchronically within the building. The iconography, and the presence of Richard, Jane and John – whose loss she had already endured – meant that she could provide an example to the congregation of the acceptance of death that was required to die well. Thus, the tomb acts, Patricia Phillippy asserts, as a form of self-fashioning and self-creation: "[a]s objects at once *possessed* and *bestowed* by early modern women, funeral monuments offered persuasive models of authorial creation and self-creation to later generations of women".[125] It is in this light, as an artefact of self-fashioning, and in line with the expanded range of texts which have been considered as autobiographical, that Lucy's monument is read.

The alabaster is mottled now, but there are still flashes of colour – red, green and black – which suggest that the figures were once painted. Richard Reynell lies to the outside of the bed and, in keeping with the fashion of the day,

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[123] Nigel Llewellyn, p.6.
[124] Patricia Phillippy asserts that the widow engaged in the construction of a joint memorial "also created an effigial self-portrait in preparation for her own death" (Patricia Phillippy, '"Monumental Circles" and Material Culture in Early Modern England' *Early Modern Women: An Interdisciplinary Journal.* Vol. 4 (2006) 139-147 (p.139)).
[125] Phillippy, p.145 (italics original).

he wears armour, reflecting not only his social status as a knight, but also evoking a chivalric association with the past which is amplified by the tomb chest which represented continuity and suggested the long ancestry of the family.[126] Richard's one hand lies across his abdomen; the other is laid on a book, presumably a Bible. Next to him lies Lucy, dressed in a full, lace collared gown which is tied at the waist, and a head-dress, with her hands clasped in prayer.[127]

Figure 20. The figures of Richard and Lucy Reynell

Lucy's pose can be traced back to the thirteenth century and, although post-Reformation postures which saw people on their knees, resting on their elbows or standing grew up alongside the traditional recumbent pose, the idea of the deceased at prayer endured, despite the possibility of its association with intercessory prayers.[128] In Lucy's case, such a choice seems appropriate, confirming as it does Edward Reynell's depiction of his pious and meditative aunt, and, although there is no evidence of any specific instructions to the tomb maker, it is probable that Lucy chose to be represented in this way.[129] Jane Waller, in

[126] The figure of Richard Reynell slightly overhangs the bed on which the couple lie. Gray suggests that this is because the sculptor had left what he considered to be a sufficient gap but that, when Lucy died, some 18 years after the monument had been built, she had put on a significant amount of weight, but it may be that he just misjudged the gap when it came to sculpting Lucy (Gray, *Remarkable Women* p22). Llewellyn asserts that "a large proportion were seen by their subjects before their deaths" (p. 53). Although Gray states that Lucy's effigy was added to the monument following her death, there is no evidence for this, and it is possible that it was in situ during her lifetime. Wolffe makes no reference to Richard serving as a soldier, but the entry in the parish register for the wedding of his daughter to William Waller states: "WALLER, William soldier and Jane Reynell, only daughter of Sir Richard Reynell soldier" (Smith, n.p.).

[127] Faunch, p.703.

[128] Nigel Llewellyn, pp.79, 81, 99-100.

[129] Faunch suggests that the absence of a contract between Lucy and Wellar, specifying the design of the monument, and the escalation of the cost may mean that their agreement was verbal rather than binding, and, in this case, he may well have executed some artistic freedom

contrast, is intricately carved in a contemplative pose, lying on her side, her right hand supporting her chin in an attitude which represents the theme of melancholy.[130] In facing the church, Jane engages directly with people; Richard and Lucy might look upwards, to heaven, but she appeals to onlookers, defying them to walk by without reflecting.[131] Finally, at the side of the monument, lies Lucy's infant son, John.[132]

Figure 21. The figure of Jane Waller (née Reynell)

Figure 22. The figure of John Reynell

in his depiction of Lucy (Faunch p.703). In addition, the fact that a number of years elapsed between the commission of the monument and its completion may mean that it was not, in fact Wellar who carved the effigy of Lucy, but someone else, who was, perhaps, not aware of any stipulations she had made concerning it.

[130] Nigel Llewellyn, p.370.

[131] Lucy would have been familiar with these poses: the Carew monument in Exeter Cathedral (opposite which the Reynells rented a house) displays two figures on a platform recumbent and in prayer, whilst the monument to Lady Doddridge has a figure lying on her side, her hand cradling a skull (Gray *Devon Household Accounts* p.40).

[132] No date is recorded on the monument for John's death, and that, added to his depiction as an infant, suggests that he died not long after birth. There are no records at St. Bride's of his baptism or burial, and no reference to his bones being found there. It may be that, as an infant, he was buried in the coffin of someone else, but, given the Reynell's position and this later monument, that feels unlikely (personal correspondence with the archivist at St. Bride's). However, the church itself was destroyed in the Great Fire of London in 1666, and it may be that any traces of John were lost then (Walter H. Godfrey, Walter H. 'History of St. Bride's: The seventeenth century to the Great Fire' *Survey of London Monograph 15, St. Bride's Church, Fleet Street*, (London: Guild & School of Handicraft, 1944), pp.24-28 (*British History Online)* http://www.british-history.ac.uk/survey-london/bk15/pp24-28 [Accessed 16 January 2019].

The way in which each member of the family is presented and consequently the image of them which would endure was part of Lucy's self-fashioning. In placing them, she directed them in death in much the way that she might have done in life, extending the same maternal and marital influence.

These effigies present the family in physical form, but Richard, Lucy, Jane and John also exist in textual mode. The family is introduced in Latin script, written in gold Roman capitals, rather than the earlier blackletter.[133]

> In Memoria Dni Richi. Reynell de Forde Militi extincti Jan 24 Ao Xpi 1633 Aet. sua 77 & Dnae Luciae Vxor. ei. charisso necnon Dnae Filae ipsae (nup.q: Dno Guiliel Waller Militi Coniuge) qua obiens ap. Bath. Ma 18. Ao. Xpi 1633 nunc ibi jacet sub Statua qmpulcra Tumulata Edifici. Johis Reynell eo 27 Filli qui Londin moriens Infantul in Ecclesia See Bridae Sepultr. est hoc extructum erat Monumentum Ao Dni 1634.[134]

Jane is not named – she is merely Dnae Filae, 'the lady their daughter' – and Lucy's date of death is not recorded, suggesting that the plaque was produced during her lifetime. John's burial at St. Bride's is noted, but not the date of it. Latin, often abbreviated, was frequently used for the attribution of social rank and attainment whilst English was preferred for poetic epitaphs; Latin served to underscore the longevity and importance of the family whilst English was used as a way of ensuring more widespread access to individual members of it.[135] Lucy's choice of both Latin and English demonstrates her understanding of tradition and her desire to ensure that her family was represented in a suitably fitting way; the composition or direction of textual memorials in the two languages adds another element to her self-fashioning.

The Reynell family's standing was amplified by the inclusion of Jane's husband's name on the memorial. William Waller, later Sir William, was a parliamentarian army officer and member of a "well-connected upper gentry

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[133] Sherlock, p.148.

[134] This is a transcription of how it appears on the plaque. The translation given in the church reads:

> In memory of Sir Richard Reynell of Forde, knight, died January 24 in the year of Christ 1633 aged 77 years: and Lady Lucie his beloved wife, and also of Lady Jane, their daughter, married to Sir William Waller, knight, who dying at Bath May 18th in the year of Christ 1633 now lies there under a magnificent tomb, and of John Reynell their son who, dying in infancy, in London was buried in the Church of St. Bride'

[135] Nigel Llewellyn, p.127.

family with aristocratic links".[136] In 1620, he served as life guard to James I's daughter, Elizabeth, for which service he was knighted.[137] He married Jane Reynell in 1622 and Sir Richard granted him an annuity of £133 6s. 8d.[138] The depth of William's feelings for Jane, and for his son, Richard, who died at the age of five, were recorded in his *Recollections,* where he described them as "both very deare blessings to me" and, also, in the epitaph which appears on the family tomb in Bath Abbey.[139] Here, he praises her as:

> Sole issue of a matchlesse paire
> Both of their state and vertues heire
> In graces great, in stature small
> As full of spirit as voyd of gall
> Cheerfully grave bounteously close
> Holy without vainglorious showes;
> Happy and yet from envy free;
> Learn'd without pride, witty yet wise
> Reader this riddle read with mee.
> Here the good Lady Waller lyes.[140]

She might be "the good Lady Waller", but her grace and "spirit as voyd of gall" are attributed to the "matchlesse paire" to whom she had been born. This creates a mutuality between the Reynells and the Wallers, with Lucy acknowledging her daughter's new family ties, as William situates his wife's finest qualities with the influence of her parents, and this cross-fertilization between the two memorials links the families in perpetuity. Waller portrays Jane as exemplary; despite her small stature, she was full of grace. She was holy, but not vain or interested in seeking the approbation of others for it. She was "Learn'd" but, like Lucy, did not wear her education and intelligence as something for which she should be praised or celebrated; rather, it was her latent wisdom which marked her out. The

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[136] Barbara Donagan, "Waller, Sir William (*bap.* 1598? *d.* 1668)." *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* online edn., (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) [Accessed 25 September 2017]. At the time of his marriage to Jane, he played no part in politics, living a private, domestic life.
[137] Donagan, ibid.
[138] Donagan, ibid.
[139] William Waller, 'Recollections' in Hannah Cowley *The Poetry of Anna Matilda* (London: John Bell, 1788), p.127.
[140] Inscription on the Waller memorial in Bath Abbey ('Memorial to Jane Waller, Bath Abbey' *Geograph: photograph every grid square* <http://www.geograph.org.uk/snippet/6759> [Accessed 28 August 2018]. William Waller built the memorial in Bath, intending to be buried there. On it, he also includes effigies of his daughter, Margaret and his son, Richard who was born in 1631 and died in 1636. Richard Waller's burial is recorded in the Wolborough parish register on the 9th September (Smith, n.p.). William was not buried in the monument in Bath, but in New (or Broadway) Chapel at Westminster, an overflow burial ground for St. Margaret's Church Westminster ('Sir William Wallis, Politician and Soldier' *Westminster Abbey* < https://www.westminster-abbey.org/abbey-commemorations/commemorations/sir-william-waller/> [Accessed 28 August 2018].

iambic rhythm and rhyming couplets are rarely distorted, and where they are, it is to draw attention to her qualities – "Cheerfully", "Holy", "Happy", "Learn'd" – or are sacrificed for the sake of ensuring that the encomium is not slavishly subsumed to the poetry. Finally, the reader is invited "this riddle read with mee". William Waller thus situates himself alongside the person reading the epitaph, suggesting an ongoing engagement with his dead wife and the fact that he would not forget her. The verse itself is not a "riddle"; the word is chosen to describe Jane and the enigma is how she could have embodied all the positive attributes ascribed to her without the corresponding negatives. The qualities for which Jane is celebrated are congruent with those valorised in married women in funeral sermons and the inclusion of them on the monument takes Jane from the private sphere of her domestic life and places her in the public sphere of the church.

In St. Mary's, Richard and Lucy are also commemorated in poetic epitaphs. Richard's reads:

> HAD THIS RARE KNIGHT WHICH NOW HEER SLEEPES IN REST
> TWELVE PRETIOVS STONES LIKE AARON ON HIS BREST
> ALL GRAVEN TO EPITAPHS THEY MIGHT IN PART
> COME NEERE THOUGH NOT REACH HOME HIS KNOWNE DESSERT
> BVT WHEN HIS HOLIE LIFE, HIS HEAVENLYE LEARNING
> HIS HEBREW TONNGE HIS HEAD DEEPE THINGES DESERNING
> FREE HART FREE HAND FVLL AGE WITH HONNORD HAYRES
> GRACT WITH HIS COWNTRYES PRAYSE AND CLERGIES PRAYERS
> HAVE PVT ONE STONE TO SPEAKE IT CANT SPEAKE ALL
> HIS WORTH'S SO GREAT ALAS ONE STONES TOO SMALL
> WOULDST KNOW HIM MORE FIRST LEARNE TO LIVE DYE THE SAME
> FOLLOW HIM TO HEAVEN THERE READE HIS PERFECT NAME

Richard's laudable qualities are celebrated. He was a "rare knight", distinguished by his subtle and remarkable mind.[141] His intellectual facility is confirmed by the reference to "his heavenlye learning", especially of the "Hebrew tonnge", with his religious scholarship emphasised over his legal training.[142] This may be because knowledge of the language would have allowed Richard to be able to read the Bible that he clasps in its original language, and thus to be able to better understand God's word, in its earliest and purest form, concomitantly establishing his pious credentials.

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[141] "rare, adj.1 (and int.), adv.1, and n," *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017) <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/158248> [Accessed 26 September 2017]

[142] Richard was a barrister and was autumn reader of the Middle Temple in 1617 (Wolffe, op.cit.).

Richard's piety is further emphasised by the comparison with Aaron, the brother of Moses. In Exodus, Aaron was appointed by God to be the spokesperson of Moses, and became the first high priest; Moses was instructed to "make holy garments for Aaron thy brother", including an "ephod of gold, of blue, and of purple, of scarlet".[143] Aaron was later required to "take two onyx stones, and grave on them the names of the children of Israel: six of their names on one stone, and other six names of the rest on the other stone, according to their birth".[144] The association of Richard with Aaron is therefore twofold. Firstly, in linking them, Lucy casts her husband as the mouthpiece of the prophet, and, ultimately, of God, who had appointed him to speak. This contrasts with the defence of Lucy's speech made by Edward Reynell; whereas Lucy's discourse had to be authorised, Richard was ordained to speak by God, emphasising the gendered nature of speech. Secondly, the association between the list of the children of Israel and Richard implies that the name 'Reynell' should be included with them. In fact, these other families did not match the "knowne desert" of this "rare knight". Thus, Lucy elevates her husband to the role of priest or minister, and the family to a position of equality with the children of Israel.

The stones that Aaron was instructed to engrave with the names of the children of Israel were stones of memorial in the same way that the monument functions as a memorial to Richard.[145] However, such "graven to epitaphs" can only partly "reach home his knowne dessert". They "cant speake all" and are not sufficient to record his manifest qualities: "His worth's so great alas one stones too small". The reference to Aaron, to Richard's "Hebrew tonnge" and to the inability of the stone to speak adequately on his behalf give primacy to the verbal, but the recording of words onto stone endows them a permanence that speech cannot achieve and allows Lucy's words, describing Richard's words, to endure.

Richard is celebrated for "his holie life, his heavenlye learning", through which he achieved a "free hart free hand fvll age with honnord hayres", the

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[143] In Exodus 4:10-17, Moses complains of his ineloquence and God tells him "thou shalt speak unto him, and put words in his mouth: and I will be with thy mouth, and with his mouth, and will teach you what ye shall do". An ephod was a priestly garment, without sleeves, slit at the sides below the armpits, fastened with buckles at the shoulders, and by a girdle at the waist ("ephod, n." *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017) <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/63223> [Accessed 23 June 2017]).

[144] Exodus 28:9-10. In the Geneva Bible verse 10 reads: "Six names of them upon the one stone, and the six names that remain, upon the second stone, according to their generation" (*Geneva Bible* (London: Robert Barker, 1600)).

[145] Exodus 28:12.

alliteratively balancing phrases underscoring the perfection of his spiritual endeavours. Lucy's use of the plural "hayres" implies a sense of posterity, of successors in the generations to come, as well as those immediately in line, and, perhaps, a wider sphere of influence, despite the fact that his granddaughter, Margaret, was his only direct descendent.[146] People who had come into contact with Richard and his teaching could aspire to be inheritors of that same salvation. In life, he had been "gract with his cowntryes prayse and clergies prayers", bridging the gap between the people and the ministers who were, according to Edward Reynell, a regular feature of the company at Ford House.[147] Richard is commemorated as a learned man; if others want to achieve the salvation which was his then they should "learne to live dye the same / Follow him to heaven there reade his perfect name". This was what Lucy had done; Edward Reynell notes the influence that Richard had had on his wife, confirming the sentiments of Lucy's poem.

Richard's epitaph places him "heer", suggesting the physical position of the body, but the designation also "responds to a nexus of deep cultural anxieties".[148] As Scott Newstock observes, the use of 'here lies' or similar formulations raises several important questions about who lies there, the nature of the body contained in the tomb, the perpetuity of its existence there, the ownership of the space within which the memorial is erected and the fact that the notion of 'here' is dependent on the context in which it appears.[149] The indicator is needed "precisely because the body is not visibly present" at the site.[150] In this case, it is not Richard's actual body that lies 'here', but the effigy of the "rare knight", and this is set in contrast to the intellectual Richard who is celebrated in text, thus separating the physical from the mental, the body from the spirit. If, in the first line, Richard is present in the space and time claimed by the reader, by the last line he is removed to the "there" of heaven, reflecting the bifurcation of the body and soul and encapsulating the theological dispute of the Reformation: whether the body of Christ was actually present in the sacrament, or merely represented by it.[151] Richard's body and soul have been separated, the earthly

[146] Jane Waller died in 1633; her son Richard had died the year before (Donagan, op.cit.).
[147] Reynell, p.96-7.
[148] Scott L. Newstock, *Quoting Death in Early Modern England* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p.36.
[149] Newstock, p.36.
[150] Newstock, p.49.
[151] Newstock, p.27.

husk, in effigy, remaining 'here', whilst his spirit is waiting in heaven for the faithful reader of the monument.

There is no way of knowing whether Lucy composed Richard's commendatory verse herself, but she must at the very least have approved it. There is also no indication of whether she wrote her own, or whether she lived with it in the interval between the building of the monument and her own death. For some, the idea of composing one's own epitaph was hubristic: a person's character ought to be sufficiently obvious for someone else to do so, thus removing the need, something which is perhaps reflected in those testatrices who left the composition of their epitaphs to their executors or overseers. For others, the fact of living with one's own epitaph was another opportunity for meditation on one's own death.[152] If, as Faunch asserts, the texts have been moved, it is impossible to determine whether they were all erected at the same time, or whether Lucy's verse came later. However, the variation in stone colour, the distinctive appearance of the lettering and the difference in the verse structure suggest that her epitaph was engraved separately.[153]

[152] Newstock, p.65.
[153] See Figure 22. The stone is a lighter grey and, whilst the letters in Richard's are generally consistent in size and spacing, Lucy's demonstrates greater variation.

Figure 23. Richard and Lucy's epitaphs

Lucy's commemoration takes the form of an acrostic of her name:

> LOE HERE SATE MAIESTY WITH MEEKNESS CROWND
> VAILD UNDER REVERENCE WAS COVRTSHIP FOUND;
> COMPOSD WERE ALL SUCH GRACES IN HER MIND
> YEE KNEW IN MORRALIST OR CHRISTIAN SHIN'D
>
> REFUGE OF STRANGERS, PROPHETS IOYNTURESSE
> EASY CHIRURGION, POOR MENS TREASURESSE
> YOVTHS AWE & AGES HONOR: TO GOD WHEN
> NOT THVS TO MAN IMPLOYD IN PRAYERS & PENN
> EATE THROUGH THIS MARBLE IF TIME SHALL SHE HATH
> LEFT UPON LIVING STONES HER EPITAPH

The letters u and v were not differentiated and employing this convention allows the poem to make Lucy's attributes – her "maiesty" and "meekness" – "vaild".[154] The meanings of vailed – lowered, doffed or taken off in salutation – alongside the homophonic 'veiled' suggests something which was hidden or covered, and

[154] The poem also omits the final 'l' of Reynell, leaving an even number of lines which allows the pattern of rhyming couplets to work.

then revealed.[155] Thus a complex web of meaning is evoked in which her "maiesty" and "meekness" are both saluted and hidden, allowing her to be celebrated for her qualities at the same time as being fêted for the modesty with which she displayed her "covrtship".[156] At the opening, the "here" is prefaced with "loe" as the poem seeks to draw attention away from Richard to Lucy. Like Richard, she is presented as both a physical being and a textual one, but she is valorised in the past tense: whilst Richard "lies" still in the form of his effigy, Lucy "sate"; her graces "were" in her mind and "under reverence was covrtship found". With her death, the qualities were extinguished, whereas Richard's sleeping in rest suggests an ongoing state.

The ideas in Lucy's epitaph are commensurate with those expounded by Edward Reynell. He equates her with Priscilla; here she is the "prophets ioynturesse". Reynell lauds her for her charity, and this is echoed by the idea that she was the "refuge of strangers", "poor mens treasuresse". The feminised forms of the words mark her out as a woman, but the inclusion of the masculine "chirurgion" suggests that she was not confined to the feminine role.[157] All of her efforts were, however, secondary to her duty to God, a duty which she fulfilled "in prayers & penn", an observation once again congruent with Reynell's claims for his aunt's spirituality, and possibly suggests that she used her "penn" to compose the words for Richard's memorial, and maybe her own.

As with Richard's epitaph, there is an acknowledgement of the inadequacy of the stone from which the memorial was built to contain the virtues of the person commemorated. Richard's stone is too small to do justice to his qualities; Lucy's is too impermanent, and time will "eat through this marble". The allusion to stone as both durable and subject to erosion and to its inadequacy in communicating all that could be said of the deceased also appears in Lucy Hutchinson's *You sons of England whose unquenched flame*, which suggests the ubiquity of the

[155] "vailed, adj." *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017) <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/221077> [Accessed 3 October 2017]; "veiled, adj." *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017) <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/221922> [Accessed 3 October 2017].
[156] "Behaviour or action befitting a court or courtier; courtliness of manners" ("courtship, n." *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017) <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/43258> [Accessed 3 October 2017].
[157] "chirurgeon, n." *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017) <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/31908> [Accessed 3 October 2017].

idea.[158] Despite this propensity to disintegration, Lucy's good works would endure in the form of the "living stone" upon which she "hath left … her epitaph". This might be a reference to the charity houses that she left, the stone buildings which were living by virtue of the fact that people inhabited them but may also be a reference to her granddaughter.[159] Margaret, as her sole beneficiary, became inheritor not only of her earthly estate, but also of her spiritual aspirations, and charitable works. She was their "honnord hayres" and, as such, a living testament to Lucy and Richard.

As well as eulogising Richard and Lucy, the message of the monument is that the onlooker should learn to die well. Positioned between the attribution and the poems to the individuals is the legend:

> CARE LERN LIVE & DYE RICH
> Who Car to Liue who Liue & loue to leaRne
> Who leArne to dyE shall In their Deaths dYcerne
> Such caRes rewaRde thYs liue You all in which
> Y shall liuE happy aNd beE sure dyE RycH[160]

As in dying well texts, the message is that by living well and by learning to die the audience could achieve a good death, and "dye rych". These ideas are spanned by notions of caring and learning, qualities which are attributed to Richard and Lucy in their epitaphs. The idea of dying rich, in the context of a memorial which was an "expensive object[s] of display and consumption", seems incongruous, but can be read as demonstrating that the Reynells had died well despite their wealth.[161] In the same way that they had consciously positioned themselves as pious and sober despite their wealth and position in their portraits, so the monument sought to tread the line between modesty and conscious display.

This focus on dying well and on the inevitability of death is reflected in the iconography of the monument. In his crib at the side of the installation, John Reynell's hand rests on a skull, and, under the hand of the infant, it is a poignant reminder of the unpredictability of death. The skull is duplicated in the grasp of one of the angels on the canopy, who also holds a candle; the second angel

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[158] Sarah C.E. Ross and Elizabeth Scott-Baumann (eds.) *Women Poets of the English Civil War* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018), p.295.
[159] This will be expanded on in the discussion of Lucy Reynell's will.
[160] The capitalisation is as it appears on the inscription.
[161] Llewellyn, p.225; Matthew chapter nineteen, verse twenty-four states "And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God" (*Geneva Bible* (London: Robert Barker, 1600)).

clasps a candle and an hourglass. The skull and the hourglass both symbolise the certainty of death, and the finality of life, and the candles signify the enlightenment of those who understand this and live their lives accordingly. The figure of Time, with his wings and hourglass, once again signifies the uncertainty of the time of death, whilst the cardinal virtue, Justice, refers to Richard's profession, but also evokes the judgement and justice of the last day. Thus, the messages of the tomb are presented in emblematic as well as written form, the better to be accessible to all who saw it.

Unlike other women who requested monuments in their wills, such as Mary Hort and Mary Bartlett, Lucy did not wait until her death to commission a memorial but did so whilst she was alive.[162] This meant that she could exercise a degree of control over its production and design which was not available to most other testatrices. Whilst there is no evidence of a contract with the stone mason, it seems reasonable to assume that Lucy was fully engaged in all aspects of its construction. As such, the installation not only reminded her of her own mortality but also marked Lucy and the family as exemplary Christians who were worthy of contemplation, making it a keystone of her concerted campaign of self-fashioning.[163] It was intended to endure, to prolong Lucy's memory and to celebrate her and her family, extending a public expression of their piety as a *memento mori* and as a physical entity which might focus the attention of the congregation on the immanence and inescapability of their own death. Reading the monument as an example of autobiography allows us to consider how Lucy used the opportunities available to her to create texts which not only reflected but actively fashioned a representation of herself, and to seek enduring memorialisation. In the same way that she provided the material for her portrait through her choice of clothes and jewellery, she determined the representation of herself and her family on the monument, authoring its composition as well as that of the text which accompanies it.

Lucy Reynell's Will

Lucy Reynell's will completes the collection of self-fashioning texts. Although, in very many ways, this document is consistent with those written by other women at this time and considered here in its sentiments, the existence of Reynell's

[162] See chapter three for a discussion of women's requests for monuments.
[163] Llewellyn, p.346.

narrative, the charter for the almshouses, the portrait and the monument, allows it to be read not as an individual entity, but as part of a dialogue with other accounts of Lucy's life and death. As a result, it is possible to consider the extent to which the will can be deemed an accurate reflection of Lucy's fashioned self, as autobiographical and as an example of women's writing.

The will was written some two years before Lucy died, and opens with a fulsome expression of her faith which confirms the piety that Edward Reynell records:

> In the name of the ffather the sonne and the holy ghost Amen I Dame Lucy Reynell of fford in y county of Devon widdowe beinge in perfect memory praised be almighty God of heaven and earth, knowinge that all mankind must dye and appeare before his Divine maiestie in Judgement acknowledging my selfe the worst of synners do desire to quiett my mind and settle such worldly Blessings as it hath pleased my bountifull God to give unto me that those cares being disposed and my heart and minde settled wholy upon my blessed god and mercifull ffather in whome only I trust to receive remission of my sins by the death of my saviour Jesus Christ I triumph over death and hell because he hath made full satisfaction for all true faithfull and repenting sinners and having himself for and he will give unto me all things needfull for my soul and body. Therefore my heart rejoycest and in my song I will praise him Death is swallowed up in victory and trusting in the meritts of my saviour which are become wholy myne by faith I doe willingly resign my soule unto God who gave it and my body to the grave to become dust assuredly believing that at the last day they both shall bee united againe and myne eies shall see him and on me his great mercy shall appeare by saving me in the blood of his son (who am unworthy) And therefore that worldly cares cary not my thoughts to earthly things I dispose what God hath given unto me in his free mercy in manner following…[164]

In its evocation of the trinity, the document echoes her husband's will, written in 1618, some fourteen years before his death, which opens "In the name of Jehovah the father the son and the holy ghost my creator redeemer and sanctifier one eternal God blessed and praised for ever and ever Amen".[165] Richard states that his will was "written with my own hand", and his use of the name "Jehovah", rather than God, seems rooted in the Hebrew learning to which Lucy alludes in his epitaph.[166] Lucy's prelude thus reiterates the sentiments of Richard's, but without the explicit claim to his learning.

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[164] TNA PROB11/221/737

[165] TNA PROB11/165/344. The other wills written by testatrices in Newton Abbott during this period, all use the more basic formulation "In the name of God Amen", which suggests that it is not a scribal formulation (Ann Stoodlight 30/12/1651 TNA PROB11/219/814; Elizabeth Pomeroy PROB11/220/719; Margaret Necke PROB11/266/166; Mary Rennolds/Rennols PROB11/289/344; Richard Reynell PROB11/165/344). However, no concrete conclusions can be drawn as we only have those wills proved at the PCC, the locally proved wills having been lost in 1942.

[166] Jehovah is generally translated as LORD ('Jehovah' in *Illustrated Bible Dictionary* Matthew George Easton (Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson, 1897)

Lucy is “in perfect memory” and therefore qualified to write a will and does so in the knowledge “that all mankind must die and appear before his divine majesty in judgement” and “acknowledging my self the worst of sinners”. Whereas other women mention sin – Martha Hunt claims that she is “penitent and sorry from the bottom of my hart for all my sins” and Mary Tayler hopes to “receive remission of my sins” – Lucy associates herself with her transgressions, claiming agency for them.[167] Her “desire” is to “quiet my mind” and “settle” her estate so that she can focus on achieving a good death, in line with the messages of the dying well texts, and with the sentiments of her husband, who sought to dispose of his estate “the more freely and entirely to entertain spiritual meditations, doctrines, prayers and thanksgiving with all charitable devotions”.[168] This language, of settlement and quieting, gives Lucy’s actions a tangibility and the will allows her to verbalise the process.

Lucy does not initially describe her document as a will. Where the word ‘will’ is used, it is as an expression of intent. She hopes that God “will give unto me all things needful for my soul and body”; in return she “will praise him” and she “willingly resign[s]” her soul”. The use of “will” here encodes Lucy’s desire and purpose; she wants God to give her what she needs and she is intent on praising him in return.[169] God’s reciprocation – that “at the last day” her body and soul “shall be united again and my eye shall see him and on me his great mercy shall appear” – sets his ‘shall’ “idiomatically … in contradistinction” to Lucy’s ‘will’ and expresses her confidence that these things will take palce.[170] The distinction is subtle, but the use of the different auxiliary verbs sets Lucy’s desire in contrast to God’s promise; the repetition of these auxiliary verbs confirms Lucy’s expectation of salvation, whilst her parenthetical observation that she is “unworthy” once again demonstrates the devotional disposition noted by Edward Reynell.

Within the space of the prelude, qualification and preamble, God is given a variety of names – “father”; “almighty God”; “divine majesty”; “bountiful God”;

<http://www.biblestudytools.com/dictionaries/eastons-bible-dictionary/> [Accessed 28 August 2018]).

[167] TNA PROB11/219/159; PROB11/246/74.

[168] TNA PROB11/165/344.

[169] "will, v.1." *OED Online*, Oxford University Press, June 2017, www.oed.com/view/Entry/229051. [Accessed 27 October 2017].

[170] "shall, v." *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017) <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/177350> [Accessed 27 October 2017].

"blessed god"; "merciful father" – identifying different aspects of Lucy's relationship with him, as child and as subject, offering a wider range of descriptors than was generally seen in other wills, where God was maker, or sometimes merciful father, and creator.[171] He has been bountiful in the earthly goods that he has given her, is the blessed recipient of her unrestricted thought now that she has disposed of them, and merciful in anticipation of the remission of her sins. For her, God is a multifaceted being who has played different roles in her life and death. Alongside the ideas of the God of mercy and salvation, however, there is once again a sense of Lucy's agency. It is "I" who will praise him, "I" who resigns her soul, "I" who trusts. She uses her will to articulate her hope of securing redemption, as a space in which she is able to demonstrate her thought processes and evince her credentials for it, once again echoing the questions about her salvation which Reynell attributed to his aunt in life. This 'I' is the same one which will 'give and bequeath', but its repeated use in the commendation establishes it as a spiritual being before it becomes concerned with the worldly and the physical.

These ideas, of salvation and worth, continue to exercise Lucy, once again allowing her to display the expected demeanour of assured humility. Through her privations, she has come to know God and can assert that "death is swallowed up in victory", a reference to 1 Corinthians 15:54, and a repetition of the words which she purportedly uttered at her death.[172] In the Bible, this verse is followed by the apostrophic "O death, where is thy sting? O truth where is thy victory", which recall Hosea 13:14: "O death, I will be thy plague! O grave, I will be thy destruction".[173] Paul wilfully misreads Hosea's words and, rather than inviting death to wield its sting as Hosea does, Paul uses the words to taunt death, emphasising its powerlessness.[174] Sin represents death's sting, but mankind is granted victory over it by God, through the death of Jesus.[175] In verse 22, Paul claims "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive",

[171] See chapter two for a discussion of how the testatrices who employ Francis Yeomans cast God in their wills.
[172] "So when this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory" (1 Corinthians 15: 54)
[173] *King James Bible* (Cambridge: Chadwych-Healey, 1996). The wording is the same in the Geneva Bible, but the word "death" is used rather than "plague".
[174] John Barton, and John Muddiman, *The Oxford Bible Commentary* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001) p.1132.
[175] Barton and Muddiman, p.1132.

suggesting the universality of redemption.[176] However, the following verse implies a less all-encompassing categorisation: “But euery man in his owne order: the first fruites is Christ, afterward, they that are of Christ, at his coming shall rise againe”.[177] This seems to reference Paul’s earlier indications as to the identity of the saved. Chapter 1:18, for example, states “unto us which are saved it is the power of God”, and in chapter 6:9-10, Paul outlines the qualifications necessary to receive salvation:

> Know ye not that the vnrighteous shal not inherit the kingdome of God? Bee not deceiued: neither fornacators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor wantons, nor buggerers
> Nor theeues, nor couetous, nor drunkards, nor railers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdome of God.
> And such were some of you: but yee are washed, but yee are sanctified, but yee are justified in the Name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God.[178]

The inclusiveness of ‘all’ is thus challenged by the exclusivity of ‘us’ and the separation of a “yee” that are “washed” from the categories of those who are unqualified suggests a greater degree of selectivity. Lucy’s assurance, therefore, that she would be saved through her faith is grounded in her reference to the ideas espoused by Paul. She situates herself with the washed, the sanctified and the justified and presumed salvation as such. Lucy knows, acknowledges, “trust[s]”, “desire[s]”, “triumph[s]”, “praise[s]”, “resign[s]”, a series of non-agentive verbs which minimise her active participation. However, she takes control when, finally, she “dispose[s]” of her “earthly things”. In suggesting Paul’s words, Lucy’s will resonates with the messages contained in Corinthians, that to deny resurrection is to reject the power of God, and that to renounce the resurrection of Christ is to refute the idea that through his death all sins are forgiven. Thus,

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[176] 1 Corinthians 15:22

[177] 1 Corinthians 15:23 (*Geneva Bible*). In the *King James Bible,* the wording is slightly different: “But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christs at his coming” with the omission of the mention of rising again.

[178] 1 Corinthians 6:9-10 (*Geneva Bible*). The *King James Bible* frames the same thing with subtle differences:

> Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind,
> Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit the kingdom of God.
> And such were some of you: but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God

whilst prostrating herself and articulating her unworthiness, she has to accept that she will be resurrected; not to do so would be to deny Christ's power.

Resurrection did not mean the reappearance of the earthly body, but rather the achievement of "a body of a much higher order than our present physical condition".[179] Thus, Lucy does not attribute a form to her resurrected body, merely "assuredly believing" that, in some shape, body and soul would be reunited. Knowledge of God is beyond her imagination; the closest she can get is that, in some way, she will "see" him. In the same way that she cannot conceive of a corporeal body, she perhaps ascribes to sight a meaning more in line with a dream or vision, a heavenly sight rather than a human one.[180] That God will give her "all things needful for my soul and body" means that "my heart rejoycest and in my soul I will praise him". The heart was often considered the site of the soul; if her heart was singing, then so was her soul, freed from its corporeal restraints.[181] However, her reluctance to presume a form for her resurrected body is belied by the shape which she has given or commissioned of it on her monument; in the absence of the ability to imagine what it might look like, she resorted to her earthly body as representative.

Lucy's commendation reflects the tension between the earthly and the heavenly enacted within a will. A will was a legal, earthly document within the constraints of which the testatrix sought to demonstrate her spiritual qualification, but this was not the only contrast within the document. The binaries between heaven and earth, judgement and redemption, death and victory, soul and body allowed no space for equivocation, and Lucy uses them to demonstrate her determination to ensure that she positions herself on the right side, before moving on to the activity for which the will was designed: the devising of her goods.

In many ways, Lucy's bequests follow the pattern of other women, and similarly offered the opportunity to not only reflect her life but to actively construct it. Lucy begins by leaving to "the minister that shall preach my funeral sermon the sum of forty shillings and one mourning gown or cloak". According to Edward Reynell, this was the Reverend Doctor William Peterson, Dean of Exeter, but, at

[179] Barton and Muddiman, p.1132. Paul compares the idea of two bodies to the presence of celestial and earthly bodies, and to the transformative relationship between a seed and the plant which grows from it (I Corinthians 15:37-38).
[180] "see, v." *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017) http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/174749> [Accessed 5 October 2017].
[181] Richard Sugg, 'The Search for the Soul' *History Today* Volume 67 Issue 4 (2017) 48-50.

the time of her death, the incumbent at St. Mary's, Wolborough, was William Yeo, of whom Edmund Calamy said:

> he liv'd in good Repute, and did much Service by his serious and affectionate Preaching and exemplary Life. He found the Town [of Newton Abbot] very Ignorant and Profane, but by the Blessing of GOD upon his Labours, the People became very Intelligent, Serious and Pious. He had a great Authority among them, and was a Terror to loose Persons, and put a stop to the open Profanation of the Lord's-Day, by walking with a Constable round the Town, after the Publick Worship was over. He was highly esteem'd by his Brethren in the Ministry, and well respected by the Neighbouring Gentry, being a genteel Man, and very Facetious and Pleasant in Conversation. He was of a generous Spirit, an affectionate Preacher, and a close Student; one that had well digested what he had read.[182]

William Yeo was removed from his living in 1662, on account of his non-conformity. Given that Richard paid for a "Chaplain celebrating divine Service" and Lucy recorded on a slip of paper inserted into the account book a reminder of what she paid for the church, William Yeo may well have been a minister whose doctrine the Reynells approved and it may be Yeo who she had in mind to preach for her. In any case, Lucy uses her will to commission a funeral sermon, leaving money for the service and thus entering into a contract with whoever happened to deliver it to ensure that her memory was celebrated at her funeral.

The will was proved on the twentieth of May 1652, but had been written in advance of Lucy's death, potentially during one of the illnesses which Edward Reynell describes.[183] Neither was this her first will; she had been forced to amend her bequests following the death of one of her original beneficiaries:

> And whereas in my former will I did give unto my old longe trusty and faithfull servant Anne Trosse (who is since deceased) the some of one hundred pounds I doe declare further that my will is that the said hundred pounds soe given be equally divided and I doe give the said some of one hundred pounds to Lucie Trosse Elizabeth Trosse George Trosse Ann Trosse and Charles Trosse grandchildren of the said Ann Trosse the older and George Trosse her husband and the children of Thomas Trosse the sonne to be equally divided amongst them.[184]

Anne Trosse was the wife of the Reynell's steward, George. That her name is included in the will despite her death suggests that she was still in Lucy's thoughts and, by including her, Lucy engages in a form of memorialisation. In the reading, proving and executing of the will, Anne's name would be remembered, and with

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[182] Edmund Calamy (ed. Samuel Parker) *ay: Being an Account of the Ministers, who Were Ejected Or Silenced After the Restoration, Particularly by the Act of Uniformity, which Took Place on Bartholomew-Day, Aug. 24, 1662* (London: Alex[r] Hogg, 1778), p.385.
[183] According to Reynell, she died on the 18[th] April 1652, which suggests that her will was proved in a timely fashion.
[184] TNA PROB11/221/737.

it the woman herself as well as the connection between the two of them. The effusive description of her as "old long trusty and faithful" indicates an enduring relationship, the adjectives demonstrating the qualities which Lucy most admired about Ann and the pairing of synonyms – old and long, trusty and faithful – serves to amplify them. The longevity and closeness of their relationship – George and Anne were also remembered in Richard's will – seems to be confirmed by the transfer of the bequest to Anne's grandchildren, and the fact that the first of these was also named Lucy suggests that the Trosses formed part of Richard and Lucy's circle. Children, grandchildren and godchildren were often named for their parents, grandparents or godparents. Here, though, it is not Anne's daughter who was called Lucy, but her granddaughter, indicating a lasting association between the Reynell and Trosse families, and ties which extended beyond the generation of Lucy, Richard, Anne and George.[185] Whilst Lucy describes Anne as her servant, the term itself did not solely signify manual labour, but could apply to people who were "managerial, supervisory, or fiscal agents", including stewards and this certainly accords with the role which George Trosse played in the Reynell household.[186] Thus, the relationship between Anne and Lucy may well have been more intimate than the designation 'servant' implies and this is suggested in the will; Anne's death was one of those "sublunary" privations which Lucy had had to bear.[187]

The strength of the relationship between the Reynells and the Trosses is also evident in the household account book, which demonstrates the extent to which Richard, and later Lucy, relied on their steward. When the Reynells were in Exeter, where they rented a house, George ran the estate at Ford, and he recorded the expenditure accrued in doing so. In December 1627 this amounted to "04 04 01 ½ " and in October 1628 he spent one shilling and four pence on two pullets and fresh fish and one shilling and three pence "for candles against your Worship coming home".[188] Following Richard's death, references in the accounts

[185] Lucy Trosse is also Lucy Reynell's goddaughter, which results in an addition bequest of £20. The will of a George Trosse of 1658 includes bequests to Lucy, Elizabeth, George and Ann Trosse, suggesting that this might be the same George Trosse (PROB11: Will Registers1655-1659 Piece 278: Wootton, Quire Numbers 314-362 *Ancestry.co*.uk).
[186] Robert J. Steinfeld, *The Invention of Free Labor: The Employment Relation in English & American Law and Culture, 1350-1870* (Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1961), p.18, 8.
[187] Reynell, p.95.
[188] Gray, *Household Accounts* p.6, 28.

to George demonstrate a significant reliance on him by Lucy. He was tasked with serving as a conduit between her and various people in financial transactions, including those with Wellar, the tomb maker, and for the purchase of a new coach and "my new house", and with collecting rents.[189] Lucy records that she paid him "£4 for this year's stewardship, this Good Friday" in 1642.[190] Whilst, during Richard's life, George's hand was frequently seen in the accounts, he did not contribute after Richard's death, but his name was a frequent feature of Lucy's (albeit sporadic) record keeping.

Richard left "to George Troyce ten pound and to his wife ten pound and to each of my other servants at the time of my decease a yearly wage", bequests which separated the Trosses from the remainder of the servants.[191] Anne, along with the other servants, receipted her bequest in the account book: "delivered Anne Trosse her legacy given her by my husband £10, received by me, paid. A T the sign of Anne Trosse".[192] George Trosse gave more fulsome thanks for his gift:

> Received of the right honourable my Lady & mistress the sum of ten pounds bequeathed unto me by the last will and testament of my most worthy master Sir Richard Reynell of Ford knight, deceased, I say received £10 by me Geo: Trosse.[193]

The Trosses were also remembered by Lucy at Christmas 1639 when she gave "to George Trose £10, to Anne Trose £2".[194] Anne Trosse only appears once more in the accounts, when Lucy records that she "[p]aid nan Trose for dowlas 18 yard 18s for thread tap [illegible] cloth 6s 8d".[195] Whilst nan was the name given to a serving-maid, Anne is the only person recorded as such in the accounts, suggesting Lucy's particular affection for her.[196]

The Trosses are not, however, the only servants to whom Lucy leaves bequests. Whilst Richard gave a blanket bequest of a year's wages to each of his, Lucy makes specific gifts to named individuals. Mary Martyn receives five pounds; Sara Hosegod gets the same amount and half of Lucy's wearing clothes

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[189] Gray, *Household Accounts* p.108, 109.
[190] Gray, *Household Accounts* p.109.
[191] TNA PROB11/165/344.
[192] Gray, *Household Accounts* p.106.
[193] Gray, *Household Accounts* p.106.
[194] Gray, *Household Accounts* p.108.
[195] Gray, *Household Accounts* p.107.
[196] "nan, n.1." *OED Online* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, December 2018] <www.oed.com/view/Entry/237306> [Accessed 1 February 2019]. Other servants are given their full names.

and Richard Reynolds is awarded ten pounds. She gives to "Mary Holmer and Alice Joanes widows my old and loving servants to each of them the sum of forty shillings". These gifts are given with a proviso: that "none more of my beforenamed servants have any of the legacies unto them before given but only such as shalbe in my service at the time of my death". Whilst she is keen to reward the fidelity of her "loving servants", they needed to be in her employ at the time of her death to receive it. Through these bequests, Lucy displays her household; these are the people who received her ministry, and who she "put[s] in remembrance of her Departure".[197]

Like many women, Lucy uses her will to make charitable bequests, and, like Elizabeth Paige her main focus was her almshouses:

> [f]irst I give unto the poore of the parish of Wolborough the some of ten pounds ffower pounds whereof I give unto the fower ministers widdowes placed in the widdowes houses there to each of them twenty shillings the other six pounds to be distributed to the other poor of that parish by the discretion of my servant George Trosse within three dayes after my funeral day.[198]

Again, her trust in George Trosse is demonstrated in the discretion with which she endoweds him when it comes to distributing part of the bequest within the parish. Her gift to the widows serves not only to make extra provision for women whom she had already supported, but also to ensure that the charity that she had exercised in life was not forgotten. Her gifts are in the present and are contingent upon her death, but the "widdowes houses" represent her life. They bore her name and as such stood as a monument to her just as clearly as the memorial in Wolborough church. Whilst the designator "my" was used as a way of securing memorialisation through bequests given, and the almshouses are designated as "my" in the account book, Lucy uses the determiner "the" as she relinquishes them in death. [199] She does not need to mark them as hers – the charter which she leaves with them will ensure that her association with the almshouses will continue.[200]

In order to support her charity, Lucy allocates significant tracts of land, both in Newton Abbot and in Paignton, in the control of a group of men – her "trusted and welbeloved friends" – and their assigns, including George Trosse,

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[197] Reynell, p.53.
[198] TNA PROB11/266/167; PROB11/221/737.
[199] Grey, *Household Accounts* p.108.
[200] Grey, *Household Accounts* p.108.

"to and for the only and sole charitable use and uses expressed in one and more indentures bearing date the eighth day of March in the year of our lord God one thousand six hundred and forty".[201] The date of these indentures once again demonstrates Lucy's desire to ensure that her worldly estate would be in order at the time of her death by making provision for her charity at its inception. The list of men she chooses to serve as trustees for the charity is impressive: Sir George Chudley of Aston, baronet; Sir Nicholas Martyn of Exon, knight; Sir Henry Cary of Cockington, baronet; Richard Cabil, esquire; George Chudley, son of Sir George Chudley; Thomas Reynell, esquire; Thomas Carwin, esquire; Gregory Hookmore, esquire; Henry Ford, esquire; Arthur Upton. In addition, she names George Trosse; amongst this company, he is no longer "servant", but "gent". Whilst the nobility was apt to employ men of gentle birth within their households, and George was likely to have been well born, Lucy now elevates him from servant to gent and so bestows on him the requisite standing to serve alongside the other men whose full, and illustrious, titles she rehearses. During her life, he had been a servant; at her death, he becomes her representative on the board of trustees, and she accords him the status to match the position. Lucy uses her will to manipulate the way in which George is seen; in the same way that her own self-fashioning in her portrait and the description of the way she dressed in Reynell's account were context-dependent, so George's status is altered according to the role which he is to play. This further demonstrates the extent to which women used their wills in order to exert power over others, and not just in the domestic sphere, as seen in chapter three. Lucy assumes and asserts the same influence that she had created for herself in life through the proxies that she appoints in her will, and the will grants her the authority to do so.

The lands which she leaves to service her charity are extensive and fully articulated. This ensures that there is no confusion as to which parcels of property she is talking about; at the same time, it serves to confirm the extent of her holdings and therefore to situate her and her family as important landowners in the area. Not only was she a land owner, she was also a landlady. Many of the premises that she mentions had been leased out for sixty or seventy years, to individuals and their heirs, ensuring that there would be a good income to support

[201] TNA PROB11/165/344.

the widows' houses into the future and again reinforcing the longevity of her family, and continuing her presence within the community.[202]

Aside from her charitable bequests and those to her servants and to the minister, the beneficiaries of Lucy's will are family members.[203] The profits from a range of leases held in trust by Sir George Chudley and George Trosse should be used to pay her debts and legacies and funeral expenses, with the remainder to "be employed and remain for the benefit use and profit of my dearly beloved grandchild by law Sir William Courtney bart his executor and assigns".[204] Margaret Waller, Lucy's granddaughter, had married William Courtenay of nearby Powderham Castle in 1648 and Forde house had become their chief residence.[205] In his will, Richard had left Forde House and his property to Lucy, with the stipulation that she "satisfy to my welbeloved daughter Jane the sum of an hundred pound yearly for her maintenance" with the property reverting, after the death of his wife,

> unto the heires males of my body upon the body of the said Lucy begotten and to be begotten And for default of such issue I give and bequeath all the said manors Rectory lands tenements and hereditaments whatsoever unto my welbeloved daughter Jane for terme of her life And after her decease the remaynder thereof to the heires of her body lawfully to be begotten.[206]

Even in 1618 it would have been unlikely that Richard and Lucy would have more children – he was sixty and Lucy forty-one – meaning that, with Jane's death, Margaret became his sole heir. In making William and Margaret Courtenay her residual legatees, Lucy therefore not only articulates her own wishes, but also fulfils Richard's will. Again, the trust in which she held George Trosse is

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[202] The charity still provides housing "for those of limited means of the Church of England resident in Devon with a preference given to Clergy, their wives/husbands and widows/widowers or if no suitable applicant to a poor person in Devon with a preference given to widows" ('Lady Lucie Reynell's Charity *Registered charities in England and Wales* <http://beta.charitycommission.gov.uk/charity-details/?regid=262114&subid=0> [Accessed 28 August 2018].

[203] TNA PROB11/221/737.

[204] Courtney is the spelling used throughout by Lucy.

[205] 'Old Forde House' *Teignbridge District Council, South Devon* <https://sites.teignbridge.gov.uk/ofh/HistoryofOldFordeHouse> [Accessed 28 August 2018]. It is likely that Lucy oversaw the bringing up of her granddaughter at Forde. Margaret and Sir William were buried at Wolborough, although there is no monument to them.

[206] TNA PROB11/165/344.

demonstrated in the role he is assigned, and, for their pains, her executors are given "twenty nobles".[207]

Alongside property, which is left jointly to William and Margaret, Lucy also bequeaths to:

> my dear grandchild thirtie Jewells of gold sett with diamonds whereof in fowerteen of them are contayned fyve diamonds in each (one of them I gave her heretofore and the other seventeen contained each of them one diamond which were sometimes the Jewells of my Dear Daughter her mother the lady Waller. And all other my Jewells and rings together with my cabinett and all that is in it.[208]

Given that Lucy conflates everything in her "cabinet" and "all other my jewels and rings", her decision to itemise the other pieces suggests that she wants to draw particular attention to them and to highlight their significance. The focus on the composition of the jewels, the number of diamonds each contained, emphasises the monetary value of them, but the attribution of them as being "sometimes the jewels of my dear daughter her mother the lady Waller" imbues them with a greater significance than their financial worth, and marks them as more important than her own jewellery through their association with Jane, endowing them with extrinsic value, as was discussed in chapter three. Estelle Jelinek observes that sometimes women's autobiography is concerned less with a presentation of themselves than with broader concerns, such as telling children about the achievements of their father; in this instance, Lucy's description of her mother's jewellery serves to re-establish Margaret's connection to Jane.[209] Lucy's description of her daughter demonstrates her affection for her, and, at the same time, restates Jane's social standing as the wife of William Waller, as she had in her reference to him on the family tomb, thus reaffirming the links between the two families. Waller may have remarried, but, through her will, Lucy re-enacts the association and situates Margaret within her father's family and her mother's family as well as that of William Courtenay.

In addition to her jewellery, Lucy leaves to her granddaughter "my books of divinity that she may learn to do good to poor diseased and sick people for

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[207] A noble was a gold coin, originally minted by Edward III, usually valued at 6s. 8d. ("noble, adj. and n.1." *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017) <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/127485> [Accessed 12 October 2017]).
[208] TNA PROB11/221/737.
[209] Jelinek, E. 'Women's Autobiography and the Male Tradition' in Jelinek, E. (ed.) *Autobiography: Studies in the First Person Singular.* Cambridge. Cambridge University Press. 1993. p. 17.

charity's sake".[210] That these books exist in the plural and are claimed as "my" echoes Reynell's account of his aunt's devotion. These volumes of divinity give a concreteness to Lucy's spirituality; her ownership of them demonstrates a studied adherence to their tenets. Her spirituality and goodness might have been bred in her, as Edward Reynell says, but it is also something which she had actively pursued. Bibles featured in several women's wills. Both Ann Pinn and Johane Jefferies allocate money to buy bibles for their, or their husband's godchildren, thus posthumously fulfilling their spiritual duties.[211] Bibles acquired increased significance when they had belonged to the woman herself, with the designator "my" serving as a reflection of the woman's own devotion and helping to remind their legatees of it; both Margery Price and Hanna Clarke, for example, leave theirs to specified children.[212] Other descriptors indicate how the women felt about their bibles, or associate them with their standing or background. Mary Carter and Johan Deeble each leave a "great bible", whilst Mary Polden bequeaths her "great bible in the country" and her "church bible", situating her devotions in two separate spaces.[213] Neither were bibles the only books which women gave: Susan Horton's son receives his mother's "great Bible and the desk and all the books and the lesser desk", whilst Mary Clapham gives her Spanish bible to one son and "all my latin books and my English Bible" to the other.[214] However, unlike Lucy, Susan and Mary make no reference to the subject matter of the books. In leaving her books to Margaret, and stipulating what they are about, Lucy not only passes on the physical entities, but also the teaching contained within them. Her desire that Margaret "may learn to do good" from them and act for "charity's sake" demonstrates Lucy's intent that Margaret continue the work that she had begun. She thus makes Margaret her spiritual heir, as well as her physical heir, and this resonates with the idea of the "living stones" of her epitaph on her tomb. Margaret becomes the embodiment of Lucy's charity, ensuring that her legacy is passed down in a tangible form, through her granddaughter's ministrations. As with Ellenor Woodward's virginals, the books reflect Lucy's position, education and lifestyle, as well as her intention of the same for her granddaughter.

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[210] TNA PROB11/221/737.
[211] TNA PROB11/221/536; PROB11/190/96.
[212] TNA PROB11/228/66; PROB11/299/738; PROB11/220/789.
[213] Gloucestershire, England, Wills and Inventories, 1541-1858. *Ancestry.co.uk* 224528; PROB11/231/656; PROB11/148/423.
[214] TNA PROB11/200/121; PROB11/201/277.

Lucy's will clearly articulates her bequests; she takes care to specify in some detail the precise geographical location and extent of the property to be used for her gifts and to provide for her charity, and to describe the jewels left to Margaret. However, this clarity is in contrast with the somewhat confused construction of her will. Her charitable bequests are not grouped together but spread throughout the document: her award to the widows' houses is the first to be made, along with the monies left to the parish so that they are situated within it, but the actual establishment of the trust designed to provide for her charity comes half way through. Her gifts to her servants follow those to the Trosses, including half of her wearing apparel to Sara Hosegood, but, although she leaves money to Anne Martyn at this point, she does not leave the other half of her clothes to her until the very end of her will, almost as an afterthought, or as if she remembered it when the will was read to her. Similarly, her gifts of one hundred pounds to each of her "two youngest grandchildren William Courtney and Lucie Courtney" come at the very end of the will.[215] However, Anne Lawrence-Mathers' observation that, whilst male autobiographers construct whole, chronological accounts of their lives, women's autobiographies are characterized by "irregularity rather than orderliness … not chronological and progressive but disconnected, fragmentary, or organized into self-sustained units rather than connecting chapters", means that, despite its narrative incoherence, Lucy's will can be considered as a record of her life. [216]

Despite the somewhat disjointed nature of the document, Lucy is keen to ensure that her will would stand as a legal instrument. She states that

> if it shall happen any contention strife controversie or question in lawe touching or concerning this my last will and testament or any part thereof to prove or arise att any tyme after my decease (which I hope will not) that what costs charges expenses shall be layd out and disbursed there about shall be discharged and paid out of my goods and chattles.[217]

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[215] William and Lucie Courtenay were her great-grandchildren. According to Basil Henning, William and Margaret had seventeen children (Basil Henning 'Courtenay, Sir William, 1st Bt. (1628-1702) of Powderham Castle and Ford House, Newton Abbot, Devon' *The History of Parliament: the House of Commons 1660*-1690 (Martlesham: Boydell and Brewer, 1983) <http://www.historyofparliamentonline.org/volume/1660-1690/member/courtenay-sir-william-1628-1702> [Accessed 28 August 2018]. Other records name ten, with Lucy born in 1649 and William in 1650 (Todd Whitesides 'Lady Margaret Waller Courtenay' *Findagrave* <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/137919422/margaret-courtenay> [Accessed 20 January 2019]).

[216] Lawrence-Mathers, p. 7.

[217] TNA PROB11/221/737.

Lucy did not necessarily expect there to be any contention, but she makes provision just in case, demonstrating the same legal awareness as illustrated in the contract for her almshouses. Likewise, she seeks to ensure the legality of the document by revoking any previous wills made, not once, but twice, at the very end of the will and also before her final two bequests. Finally, the will is dated and signed, but no witnesses are recorded.

The lack of witnesses might indicate that Lucy, like Ann Doddington, penned her own will, although she makes no claim to have done so as Ann and, indeed, Richard did.[218] Equally, the actual text itself does not make it clear whether she had the help of a lawyer or scribe. Some of the elements – the prelude, preamble and charitable bequests, for example – occur in their traditional positions within the document, but the separation of the bequests to her servants, the placement of the gift of the other half of her wearing apparel and the bequests to her "youngest grandchildren" might suggest external prompting. Lucie and William Courtenay had been born in 1648 and 1649, before the will was written, so their relegation to the end of the document seems a little incongruous, given Lucy's concern for the wellbeing of her family.[219] More confusing still is the omission of Edward Courtenay who had been born on 19th January 1652.[220] Presumably, his great-grandmother was too ill at this point to amend her will, and as a result, he remained absent from the final document. Despite these idiosyncrasies and omissions, Lucy's will was proved on the twenty-first of May 1652.

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Lucy's will is part of a series of texts which demonstrate a desire to fashion a distinctive and worthy self. Edward Reynell's account of her life and death rehearses the conventional ideas of the charitable, virtuous widow, which were the mainstay of accounts of women's good deaths and of funeral sermons which commemorate them, but also argues for a particular and individual observance

[218] See the discussion of Ann Doddington's will in chapter two. If it were evident that the testatrix had written her will herself there was no need for witnesses (Henry Swinburne, *A Brief Treatise of Testaments And Last Wills,* (New York and London: Garland Publishing Inc., 1978), p.191).
[219] Lucie Courtenay was born on March 9th, 1648 and William Courtenay on February 16th, 1649 (Smith, n.p.).
[220] Edward Courtenay's birth was, according to Smith, registered on 19th January 1652; according to Whitesides, the child born in 1652 was Francis. As Smith's record is based on the parish register, I am confident that it was Edward who was born shortly before his great-grandmother's death.

on behalf of his aunt. The texts produced by Lucy herself which confirm these ideas situate Reynell's encomium as part of a catalogue of self-fashioning. Lucy's entries in the account book, whilst unsustained and occasional, focus on aspects such as Richard's legacies and her provision for his funeral which serve to not only memorialise him, but also to demonstrate her own proportionate mourning. This is mirrored in the funeral monument which presents the Reynell family, together, within the church which she attended, and offers carefully constructed physical and textual representations of herself, her husband, her daughter and her son, as a visual statement of their virtue and as a reminder of the death for which she had so assiduously prepared and for which the spectator also should ready themselves. The almshouses which she commissioned following Richard's death, and the charter composed for their administration, perform the same function, illustrating in physical form Lucy's charity and placing her within the community. Her portrait, alongside that of her husband, presents her sobriety and carefully controlled image as a pious woman, who, despite her status, eschewed ostentation and was more concerned with the spiritual than the worldly. These texts form an extended (auto)biography which offer both fixed and mutable versions of Lucy. In considering them as such, I advocate the acceptance of a wide range of texts as examples of both autobiography and of women's writing and include wills within this. Whether Lucy penned her charitable statement and the epitaphs for her monument is not known, but neither is it important. Lucy was an 'intentional' author who commissioned, directed and oversaw the production of these texts. She may not have physically written the words, but she provided them, shaped them and published them and, as such, they are examples of her writing.

The ideas in Lucy's will are entirely congruent with these other texts and, as such, the will can be seen as an accurate reflection of her life and her beliefs and as a further example of her writing. Whilst most women did not leave multiple texts through which they could present themselves, the case of Lucy Reynell perhaps suggests that we should not dismiss the sentiments expressed in their wills or unproblematically assign them to the scribe or the legal templatic structure of the document. Lucy was undoubtedly in a privileged position, with access to money, status and education which allowed her to fashion a self in numerous texts; other women took advantage of the one text to which they had access to

do the same. They may not leave corroborating evidence, but that does not mean that it did not exist, intangibly, silently informing the will.

Conclusion

This thesis began with the will of Grase Dolmans of Honiton, a seemingly 'ordinary' woman: she has no title, no recorded occupation, no evident social standing. Neither does she have a vast amount of property or money to leave. However, Grase uses her will to record things that were important to her: how she wishes to dispose of her soul and her body; her situation as a land owner; her business acumen; her relationships with a group of people. These elements not only reflect Grase's life, but also give us an insight into her perception of herself and how she wanted to be remembered. From what she included, it is possible to reconstitute what Grase owned, and also how she saw herself in relation to her property, to create in effect an affective inventory. It is this understanding of how women used their wills as a way of creating and presenting themselves which this thesis has sought to establish.

Much of the historiography of early modern wills has focused on those of men, suggesting that women did not testate. Of late, this androcentric approach has been countered by critics, on which this thesis builds, representing the first focused study of seventeenth-century women's wills and contributing to the increasing visibility of these documents in the archive. It has been concerned with women's attitudes to will-writing; their engagement with the idea of the creation of a post-mortem identity; their participation in trade, industry and other commercial activities; their accrual and distribution of property and the material culture with which they surrounded themselves, and has sought to determine the extent to which these ideas continued into the seventeenth-century despite the social, political and historical upheaval experienced under Charles I and the Interregnum. By focusing on wills from the south- west of England, it has sought to redress the absence of examples from this area in the literature and to give a voice to women from the region. In addition, the narrower geographical focus has allowed for a consideration of the voices of women from different ranks, instead of concentrating on aristocratic women and generalising from such examples as James does, making women from across the social range audible.

The thesis has, inevitably, built on the historical study of wills which has proliferated over the course of the past forty years. However, rather than using wills as evidence for religious belief, charitable giving, kinship networks and the

testatrix's engagement in pecuniary arrangements, the emphasis here has been on the ways in which these elements were deliberately used and manipulated by the testatrix to create, rather than merely reflect, a self. Thus, it has argued that wills can be read as consciously self-fashioning and as examples of selective autobiography. Despite the increased interest in autobiographical texts, wills have been overlooked as examples of life-writing. However, the act of writing a will offered some women the opportunity to not only dispose of their property, but also to select, omit and present information about themselves and their lives, using their will as a way of ensuring remembrance. Their writing might be in some ways constrained by the form and structure of the legal text, but the will also gave them a platform for writing and women used it for their own purposes.

By bringing to the fore the polyvocality of wills and highlighting the collaborative nature of the document, this thesis has challenged the presumption that certain textual elements – such as the preamble – were entirely scribal and has suggested that there was a greater degree of negotiation between the scribe and the testatrix than previously supposed. It has illustrated the presence of other voices in wills which created a scene in which the testatrix had the starring role, and which was played in front of those present at the writing or the deathbed. Such a reading shifts the focus from the reader who tries to reconstruct a woman's life from the evidence contained in her will, to the woman herself as she sought to create an image of herself, ascribing a greater degree of agency to the testatrix.

This selection and organisation of material, albeit within the formal constraints of a particular genre, constitutes the production of a will as an act of authorship and, as a result, I have demonstrated that wills should be considered examples of women's writing. Whilst other forms which were available to women, such as spiritual diaries, letters and mothers' legacy texts, have been increasingly constituted as an alternative canon, wills have been ignored. However, if we separate the physical act of writing from the commission of it and provision of content, women who wrote wills can be described as 'intentional' authors. This challenges simplistic notions about authorship and opens a wider range of texts and an increased number of women authors for future study.

Like other forms of writing, the will offered women the opportunity to control and craft their desires. Through it, they could cast and direct people and provide costumes, sets and scenes within which those people would act. As a result, they

used their will to continue to exert maternal, sororal and familial influence after their death, and to entail people to act as their proxy. This desire to extend their guidance beyond the grave situates women's wills alongside mothers' legacy texts. Taking the form of testaments, or assuming the authority that the proximity to death provided, women were able to write treatises which provided spiritual instruction in an alternative form, and this desire to provide moral and practical direction can also be found in women's wills. As such, they become repositories of the testatrix's continued advisory presence, articulated in a form which would be published, executed and overseen into a future in which the testatrix herself would be absent.

This thesis has also read wills alongside other forms of writing by or about women, placing them within a literary catalogue which includes *ars moriendi* texts and funeral sermons. As a result, it has demonstrated the extent to which the ideas which women project about themselves are congruent with those recorded by others, situating wills as part of a shared context of death in the early modern period. This familiarity is also evident in the use of the will and the act of will-writing on stage. Whilst relatively few people, and especially women, wrote wills, their involvement in the process as witnesses, overseers and executors meant that the process could be used as a way of shorthanding ideas about redemption, salvation, property ownership and distribution, and kinship networks. This idea has been extended and it has been argued that, where women are portrayed in the act of will-writing, there is frequently an element of self-fashioning within the act and, for this to have been a useful idea within the drama, it must have been a familiar idea to the audience. Awareness of the form also made it a productive vehicle for satire, especially when associated with a female voice. However, this argument has also been inverted: the widespread knowledge of the form, structure and language of the will allowed women such as Ann Doddington to pen their own wills. Her will was therefore a collaboration not with an individual scribe, but with a socially constructed awareness of its conventions; it was co-authored with collective knowledge.

In the case of Lucy Reynell, the existence of a number of 'texts' has permitted a consideration of how her will fits within an extended campaign of self-fashioning. The contention that the commendatory statements within a will did not necessarily reflect the beliefs of the testatrix is challenged by the weight of evidence available which confirms the piety and virtue contained within Lucy's

will. The hagiographic account of his aunt by Edward Reynell presents a woman whose own texts confirm the image he created: the charity with which he endowed her is reflected in the almshouses which she built, and which still exist today; the tomb which she erected to the family endorsed the learning, piety and compassion which he claims for her. These were the public demonstrations of her private grace, texts which she commissioned and directed in order to display it. Her will, written as she lay sick and contemplating death, is congruent with these ideas and can be accounted part of a concerted effort to communicate the self with which she wished to be associated.

Lucy's tomb serves as a physical memorial to herself and her family, but, as this thesis has argued, wills themselves can be seen as a type of textual monument, existing beyond the woman's life and allowing her to be remembered after her death. By definition, the will marks the end of her life but contains references to it. As numerous wills attest, nothing "is more certain than death and nothing more uncertain than the time thereof" and this assertion is part of the temporal fluidity which wills contain. I have here problematised the straightforward tripartite division of past, present and future: whilst not refuting the general idea of a past voice authorising a present self and imagining enactment in the future, I have called for a more nuanced understanding of the use of time by testatrices. This thesis has challenged simple definitions and has instead proposed reading wills as containing a number of pasts, presents and futures which exist concurrently within the document and render it heterochronous. Similarly, it has observed the presence of different iterations of the testatrix – as the living woman who writes the will, as the past wife or daughter, as the dead and decaying body and as the immortal soul – which exist panchronically within the confines of the parchment or paper on which they appear.

Redefining wills as examples of autobiography and as women's writing adds another corpus of texts to the study of early modern lives and to the literary canon. It offers examples of the lives of 'ordinary' women, and how they engaged with the society within which they lived (as evinced by the cases of Ann Pinn, Susann Seward and Mary Band, for instance, who all make reference to how the Civil Wars had affected them). Whilst wills have been used to chart the changes of doctrine across the Reformation, and to illustrate patterns of charitable giving, they have not been seen as a barometer of women's reactions to other events

and this thesis has illustrated that, in fact, there is scope for doing so. In addition, wills add another comparator of practice over proscription in the lives of women, not only in terms of their property ownership and disbursal, but also in their adherence to or disregard for particular behavioural codes. The act of writing a will in itself challenged the notion of female silence, offering as it did an opportunity to 'speak' and this again requires a nuanced reading of the tension between the desirability of silence and the judiciousness of ensuring that one's house is put in order before death. However, wills do more than this: they describe things, they attribute qualities and rank, they order and organise ideas, they use elements of rhetoric, they conform to generic conventions, they select and fashion events from the past and imagine ones in the future. As a result, they represent another form in which women could write.

Reading wills as examples of autobiography and women's writing means reassessing that of Grase Dolmans. Rather than simply reflecting her property ownership, kinship and social circles and commendation of body and soul, this thesis argues that the will should be considered as a deliberate attempt at constructing a self. Instead of merely listing her property and giving it to people, Grase uses her will to fashion a self in relation to what she gives and to whom. It is not only reflective, but constructive; her will does not merely describe her life, it fashions it, and the things which she leaves out are as important in this scheme as those which she includes. That she imagines a future and projects herself into it, and that she selects the elements of her life and property to include and omit, demonstrates a control over the form and function of the will and constitute her as an 'intentional' author. As such, she is not an 'ordinary' woman at all, but a remarkable author and autobiographer.

Wills consulted

Name	Date	Place	County	Archive	Reference	Notes
Ann Leighe	1622	Wotton-Under-Edge	Gloucestershire	TNA	PROB11/140/53	
Elizabeth Maie	1624	St Austell	Cornwall	Cornwall Record Office	AP/M/401	
Jane Mayd	1624	Polruan, Lanteglos by Fow	Cornwall	Cornwall Record Office	AP/M/406	
Alice Grills	1625	Liskeard	Cornwall	Cornwall Record Office	AP/G/310	
Alice Jones	1625	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/145/367	
Alice Marke	1625	Lanteglos by Fowey	Cornwall	Cornwall Record Office	AP/M/419	
Alice Wells	1625	Fordington	Dorset	Wiltshire and Swindon History Cent	P5/1625/104	Ancestry.co.uk
Catherine Stiffe	1625	Hawkesbury	Gloucestershire	Gloucestershire Archives	220483	Ancestry.co.uk
Christian Ardington	1625	Bristol	Bristol	Bristol	FCW1625/1/12	
Christian Grant	1625	Sherborne	Dorset	Wiltshire and Swindon History Cent	P5/1625/39	Ancestry.co.uk
Dorothy Chaplin	1625	Lyme Regis	Dorset	Wiltshire and Swindon History Cent	P5/1625/20	Ancestry.co.uk
Elizabeth Bevan	1625	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/145/426	
Elizabeth Burte	1625	Folke	Dorset	Wiltshire and Swindon History Cent	P5/1634/9	Ancestry.co.uk
Jane Tavenor	1625	Stratton	Cornwall	Cornwall Record Office	AP/T/434	
Jane Tom	1625	Polruan, Lanteglos by Fow	Cornwall	Cornwall Record Office	AP/T/439	

Joan Crispin	1625	Constantine	Cornwall	Cornwall Record Office	AP/C/630	
Joan Johnsons	1625	Tewkesbury	Gloucestershire	Gloucestershire Archives	220550	Ancestry.co.uk
Joan Trottle	1625	Bloxworth	Dorset	Wiltshire and Swindon History Cen	P5/1625/91	Ancestry.co.uk
Johane Kelland	1625	Totnes	Devon	TNA	PROB11/145/165	
Mary Turbervile	1625	Tewkesbury	Gloucestershire	Gloucestershire Archives	220600	Ancestry.co.uk
Alice Gray	1626	Gloucester	Gloucestershire	Gloucestershire Archives	220719	Ancestry.co.uk
Alice Wilston	1626	Dorchester	Dorset	TNA	PROB11/149/375	
Catherine Clifton	1626	Yeovil	Somerset	TNA	PROB11/150/151	
Dame Elizabeth Berkeley	1626	Bruton	Somerset	TNA	PROB11/149/253	
Elizabeth Berry	1626	Devizes	Wiltshire	TNA	PROB11/149/326	
Elizabeth Congdon	1626	Egloskerry	Cornwall	Cornwall Record Office	AP/C/655	
Elizabeth Corton	1626	Uffculme	Devon	Wiltshire and Swindon History Cen	P20/1/7	Ancestry.co.uk
Ellyn Frampton	1626	Wimborne Minster	Dorset	Dorset History Centre	WM/W/F32	Ancestry.co.uk
Jane Jones	1626	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/149/185	
Joan Teage	1626	Bristol	Bristol	Bristol	FCW1627/3	
Margaret Jenkins	1626	Gloucester	Gloucestershire	Gloucestershire Archives	220867	Ancestry.co.uk
Margery Hobbs/Langton	1626	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/149/98	
Mary Polden	1626	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/148/423	

Mary Street(e)	1626	Bridgwater	Somerset	TNA	PROB11/148/232	
Sibella Arundell	1626	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/149/48	
Cecily Gore	1627	Trowbridge	Wiltshire	Wiltshire and Swindon History Cen	P22/1/10	Ancestry.co.uk
Elizabeth Secill	1627	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/151/355	
Emme Merrick	1627	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/151/160	
Francis Browne	1627	Dorchester	Dorset	TNA	PROB11/152/462	
Jane Hutchins	1627	St Kew	Cornwall	Cornwall Record Office	AP/H/751	
Mary Salisbury	1627	Barnstaple	Devon	TNA	PROB11/151/122	
Thomazine Halswell	1627	Wells	Somerset	TNA	PROB11/152/522	
Agnes Wallis	1628	Trowbridge	Wiltshire	TNA	PROB11/153/166	
Agnis Loinge	1628	Exeter	Devon	TNA	PROB11/153/254	
Alice Heart	1628	Puddletown	Dorset	TNA	PROB11/153/692	
Alice Hurley	1628	Uffculme	Devon	Wiltshire and Swindon History Cen	P5/1628/61	Ancestry.co.uk
Alice Sharpe/Garrett	1628	West Looe	Cornwall	TNA	PROB11/154/349	
Christian Smith	1628	Shafton	Dorset	Dorset History Centre	D-787/1	
Christian Wills	1628	Exeter	Devon	TNA	PROB11/154/208	
Edith Baylie	1628	Chardstock	Devon	Wiltshire and Swindon History Cen	P5/1628/9	Ancestry.co.uk
Eleanor Edwardes	1628	Tewkesbury	Gloucestershire	Gloucestershire Archives	221216	Ancestry.co.uk

Eleanor Whitt	1628	Hawkesbury	Gloucestershire	Gloucestershire Archives	221207	Ancestry.co.uk
Elizabeth Allen	1628	Devizes	Wiltshire	TNA	PROB11/154/358	
Elizabeth Crumpe	1628	Gloucester	Gloucestershire	Gloucestershire Archives	221206	Ancestry.co.uk
Elizabeth Ham/Olmer	1628	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/154/339	
Elizabeth Merry	1628	Gloucester	Gloucestershire	Gloucestershire Archives	221213	Ancestry.co.uk
Emm Tayler	1628	Wells	Somerset	TNA	PROB11/153/795	
Joan Moore	1628	Tavistock	Devon	TNA	PROB11/154/374	
Joane Rose	1628	Corfe Castle	Dorset	Dorset History Centre	Cc/l 232	Ancestry.co.uk
Margaret Hud	1628	Trowbridge	Wiltshire	TNA	PROB11/157/553	
Margaret Messinger	1628	Gloucester	Gloucestershire	Gloucestershire Archives	221286	Ancestry.co.uk
Margarett Chubb/Chub	1628	Dorchester	Dorset	TNA	PROB11/153/523	
Maud Broad	1628	Fowey	Cornwall	Cornwall Record Office	AP/B/771	
Rose Nurse	1628	Gloucester	Gloucestershire	Gloucestershire Archives	203531	Ancestry.co.uk
Charitie Ford	1629	Yeovil	Somerset	TNA	PROB11/155/45	
Alice Pirrie	1629	Street	Somerset	TNA	PROB11/155/345	
Elizabeth Southcott	1629	Exeter	Devon	TNA	PROB11/156/498	
Elizabeth Wekeham	1629	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/155/412	
Isabel Goode	1629	Gloucester	Gloucestershire	Gloucestershire Archives	221419	Ancestry.co.uk

Joah Hithcok	1629	Sherborne	Dorset	Dorset History Centre	Ph.840/1	
Joanne Murdock	1629	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/156/94	
Margery Jones	1629	Lydney	Gloucestershire	Gloucestershire Archives	221479/118	Ancestry.co.uk
Mary Bartlett	1629	Tewkesbury	Gloucestershire	TNA	PROB11/155/113	
Maud Man	1629	Gloucester	Gloucestershire	Gloucestershire Archives	221477	Ancestry.co.uk
Theophila Dodimead	1629	Bristol	Bristol	Bristol	FCW1629/1/42	
Thomasina Weare	1629	Cullompton	Devon	TNA	PROB11/156/314	
Anne Fownes	1630	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/158/377	
Elizabeth Dowrich	1630	Exeter	Devon	TNA	PROB11/157/339	
Elizabeth Ricketts	1630	Gloucester	Gloucestershire	Gloucestershire Archives	221563	Ancestry.co.uk
Frysy (Frideswide) Baldveene	1630	Avebury	Wiltshire	Wiltshire and Swindon History Cent	P1/B/230	Ancestry.co.uk
Jane Russell	1630	Wimborne Minster	Dorset	Dorset History Centre	Wm\W\R43	Ancestry.co.uk
Joane Gould	1630	Dorchester	Devon	TNA	PROB11/158/612	
Susanna Rawlin	1630	Linkinhorn	Cornwall	Cornwall Record Office	AP/R/639	
Alice Marshall	1631	Exeter	Devon	TNA	PROB11/159/305	
Alice Rashly	1631	Bristol	Bristol	Bristol	FCW1634/4/30	
Ann Amye	1631	Exeter	Devon	TNA	PROB11/159/436	
Anna Clarke	1631	Bristol	Bristol	Bristol	FCW1631/1/39	

Avis Commings	1631	Chideock	Dorset	Dorset History Centre	D-862/f/2	
Edith Morse	1631	Taunton	Somerset	TNA	PROB11/160/218	
Eleanor Idolls	1631	Hawkesbury	Gloucestershire	Gloucestershire Archives	221768	Ancestry.co.uk
Elizabeth Niccoll/Nicholl	1631	Minehead	Somerset	TNA	PROB11/160/681	
Joan Robins	1631	Tintagel	Cornwall	Cornwall Record Office	AP/R/519	
Joan Webber	1631	Wells	Somerset	TNA	PROB11/160/607	
Johan Baugh(e)	1631	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/159/386	
Katherine Rodman	1631	Stapleton	Gloucestershire	TNA	PROB11/159/199	
Mary Saunders	1631	Trowbridge	Wiltshire	Wiltshire and Swindon History Cen	P22/1/21	Ancestry.co.uk
Susanna Southcott	1631	Exeter	Devon	TNA	PROB11/159/560	
Willmote Row(e)	1631	Plymouth	Devon	TNA	PROB11/159/551	
Alice Godolphin(e)	1632	Tavistock	Devon	TNA	PROB11/161/497	
Ann Langford	1632	Gloucester	Gloucestershire	Gloucestershire Archives	221979	Ancestry.co.uk
Anne Searchfield	1632	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/162/255	
Cicilie Gunning	1632	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/161/251	
Elizabeth Masters	1632	Tavistock	Devon	TNA	PROB11/161/145	
Jane Addames	1632	Gloucester	Gloucestershire	Gloucestershire Archives	221496	Ancestry.co.uk
Joan Cable	1632	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/162/367	

Joan Smith	1632	Tavistock	Devon	TNA	PROB11/161/426	
Joane Eliot	1632	Howlte (Holt)	Dorset	Dorset History Centre	PJ-WM/W/E/4	
Katherine Grilles	1632	Tavistock	Devon	TNA	PROB11/162/528	
Katherine Yerbury	1632	Trowbridge	Wiltshire	Wiltshire and Swindon History Cent	P22/1/27	Ancestry.co.uk
Margaret Surman	1632	Bishops Cleeve	Gloucestershire	TNA	PROB11/161/242	
Mary Babidge	1632	Cullompton	Devon	TNA	PROB11/161/593	
Agnes Cooke/Spencer	1633	Morwenstow	Cornwall	Cornwall Record Office	AP/C/818	
Agnis Morris	1633	Bruton	Somerset	TNA	PROB11/163/598	
Alice Taylor	1633	Tewkesbury	Gloucestershire	Gloucestershire Archives	258748	Ancestry.co.uk
Anne Lawfill/Lawfull	1633	Bristol	Bristol	Bristol	FCW1633/2/27	
Dame Anne Porter	1633	Gloucester	Gloucestershire	TNA	PROB11/163/650	
Elizabeth Ashman	1633	Trowbridge	Wiltshire	Wiltshire and Swindon History Cent	P22/1/33	Ancestry.co.uk
Elizabeth Bird	1633	Fowey	Cornwall	Cornwall Record Office	AP/B/848	
Elizabeth Colston	1633	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/163/331	
Elizabeth Jurdain	1633	Exeter	Devon	TNA	PROB11/164/509	
Elizabeth Trosse	1633	Exeter	Devon	TNA	PROB11/163/567	
Emme Trace	1633	Bideford	Devon	TNA	PROB11/164/702	
Joane Weale	1633	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/164/490	

Joanne Weale	1633	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/164/490	
Lettice Woollen	1633	Burington	Somerset	TNA	PROB11/163/182	
Margaret Byrdall	1633	Exeter	Devon	TNA	PROB11/163/583	
Margaret Mogg	1633	Bruton	Somerset	TNA	PROB11/163/18	
Margerie Alford	1633	Mere	Wiltshire	Wiltshire and Swindon History Cent	P5/1633/1	Ancestry.co.uk
Margery Kings/Kinges	1633	Tewkesbury	Gloucestershire	TNA	PROB11/163/347	
Margery Pierson	1633	Gloucester	Gloucestershire	Gloucestershire Archives	203472	Ancestry.co.uk
Marie Wem	1633	Gloucester	Gloucestershire	TNA	PROB11/163/570	
Mary Londen	1633	Tresham	Gloucestershire	Gloucestershire Archives	223533	Ancestry.co.uk
Alice Hooper	1634	Chardstock	Devon	Wiltshire and Swindon History Cent	P5/1634/52	Ancestry.co.uk
Anne Punchard	1634	Barnstaple	Devon	TNA	PROB11/165/137	
Beatrice Trelawny	1634		Cornwall	Cornwall Record Office	AP/T/584	
Eliazabeth Snacknaile	1634	Bristol	Bristol	Bristol	FCW1634/5/2	
Elizabeth Godwin	1634	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/166/426	
Jane Owfeild	1634	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/165/372	
Liddia Reade	1634	Bristol	Bristol	Bristol	FCW1634/4/32	
Margaret Forde	1634	Hawkesbury	Gloucestershire	Gloucestershire Archives	222349	Ancestry.co.uk
Margaret Heath	1634	Gloucester	Gloucestershire	Gloucestershire Archives	222523	Ancestry.co.uk

Margery Davis	1634	Wookey Hole	Somerset	TNA	PROB11/168/535	
Marie Pitt	1634	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/166/554	
Mary Chetwynd	1634	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/165/461	
Willmoth Whittinstal/Wittingstall	1634	Minehead	Somerset	TNA	PROB11/165/428	
Agnis Davis	1635	Shepton Mallet	Somerset	TNA	PROB11/168/536	
Alice Watkins	1635	Devizes	Wiltshire	Wiltshire and Swindon History Cent	P1/W/164	Ancestry.co.uk
Brygett Chamberlen	1635	Tiverton	Devon	Dorset History Centre	D-MHM/8822	
Dorothy Bateman	1635	Devizes	Wiltshire	TNA	PROB11/169/10	
Elianor Tench	1635	Tewkesbury	Gloucestershire	TNA	PROB11/168/15	
Elizabeth Kilbery	1635	Devizes	Wiltshire	TNA	PROB11/168/175	
Elizabeth Squire	1635	Cardinam	Cornwall	Cornwall Record Office	AP/S/759	
Ellenor Woodward	1635	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/167/506	
Joan Baylie	1635	Chardstock	Devon	Wiltshire and Swindon History Cent	P5/1635/2	Ancestry.co.uk
Joan Foord	1635	Hawkesbury	Gloucestershire	Gloucestershire Archives	222475	Ancestry.co.uk
Margaret Sparke	1635	Exeter	Devon	TNA	PROB11/168/127	
Maria/Mary Quindram	1635	Bristol	Bristol	Bristol	FCW1635/4/2	
Prudence Vennan/Venman	1635	Bristol	Bristol	Bristol	FCW1635/4/20	
Alice Heles	1636	Exeter	Devon	TNA	PROB11/172/182	

Alice Perrye	1636	Gloucester	Gloucestershire	Gloucestershire Archives	222790	Ancestry.co.uk
Ann Crocker	1636	Gloucester	Gloucestershire	TNA	PROB11/170/402	
Dorothy Freame	1636	Gloucester	Gloucestershire	Gloucestershire Archives	222647	Ancestry.co.uk
Edith Guppie	1636	Lyme Regis	Dorset	TNA	PROB11/171/162	
Elizabeth Gouldston	1636	Plymouth	Devon	TNA	PROB11/179/279	
Elizabeth Morry	1636	Tewkesbury	Gloucestershire	TNA	PROB11/170/248	
Elizabeth Stevens	1636	St Ives	Cornwall	Cornwall Record Office	AP/S/764	
Joane Welsh	1636	Bristol	Bristol	Bristol	FCW1637/5/7	
Katherine Killow	1636	Bramel	Cornwall	Cornwall Record Office	AP/K/198	
Mary Maicocke	1636	Wells	Somerset	TNA	PROB11/171/380	
Mary Merrymouth	1636	Swindon	Wiltshire	TNA	PROB11/172/247	
Susan Large	1636	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/171/165	
Susan Large	1636	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/171/165	
Alice Horwood	1637	Hawkesbury	Gloucestershire	Gloucestershire Archives	222787	Ancestry.co.uk
Alice Pitt	1637	Tewkesbury	Gloucestershire	Gloucestershire Archives	222794	Ancestry.co.uk
Anne Elliott	1637	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/173/633	
Anne Hodges	1637	Bristol	Bristol	Bristol	FCW1638/4/13	
Barbara Walker	1637	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/173/630	

Catherine Thomas	1637	Gloucester	Gloucestershire	TNA	PROB11/174/523	
Elizabeth Bluett	1637	Holcombe Regis	Devon	TNA	PROB11/174/189	
Elizabeth Tresye	1637	Newlyn	Cornwall	Cornwall Record Office	AP/T/631	
Frances Cuffe	1637	Gloucester	Gloucestershire	Gloucestershire Archives	203346	Ancestry.co.uk
Jane Bath	1637	Fowey	Cornwall	Cornwall Record Office	AP/B/915	
Joan Andrews	1637	Fishterton Delamere	Wiltshire	Wiltshire and Swindon History Cent	P2/A/174	Ancestry.co.uk
Lady Joyce, Countess of Totnes	1637	Totnes	Devon	TNA	PROB11/173/61	
Lucretia Young	1637	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/173/480	
Margaret Burges	1637	Corfe Castle	Dorset	Dorset History Centre	Cc/W 251	Ancestry.co.uk
Philipa Beale	1637	Lanteglos by Fowey	Cornwall	Cornwall Record Office	AP/B/917	
Sarah Hawker	1637	Yeovil	Somerset	TNA	PROB11/174/45	
Susanna Drew	1637	Stithians	Cornwall	Cornwall Record Office	AP/D/400	
Sybil Drinckewater	1637	Gloucester	Gloucestershire	Gloucestershire Archives	222896	Ancestry.co.uk
Temperance Pincombe	1637	South Molton	Devon	TNA	PROB11/174/336	
Alice Ayres	1638	Gloucester	Gloucestershire	Gloucestershire Archives	221193	Ancestry.co.uk
Alve Harre	1638	Wimborne Minster	Dorset	Dorset History Centre	WM/W/S38	Ancestry.co.uk
Anges Archard	1638	Bristol	Bristol	Bristol	FCW1641/1/8	
Bridget Pritchetts	1638	Gloucester	Gloucestershire	Gloucestershire Archives	222953	Ancestry.co.uk

Elizabeth Bower	1638	Wells	Somerset	TNA	PROB11/176/171	
Elizabeth Cotton	1638	Exeter	Devon	TNA	PROB11/177/112	
Elizabeth Hartnoll	1638	Barnstaple	Devon	TNA	PROB11/177/9	
Honer Rockwell	1638	Dorchester	Dorset	TNA	PROB11/176/74	
Jane Bowland	1638	Gloucester	Gloucestershire	Gloucestershire Archives	223024	Ancestry.co.uk
Mary Cowles	1638	Tewkesbury	Gloucestershire	TNA	PROB11/176/308	
Mary Tomes	1638		Dorset	Dorset History Centre	Ad/Dt/W/1659 32	Ancestry.co.uk
Eleanor Field	1639	Tewkesbury	Gloucestershire	Gloucestershire Archives	223208	Ancestry.co.uk
Elizabeth Batten	1639	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/180/115	
Elizabeth Billing	1639	Combe	Cornwall	Cornwall Record Office	AP/B/975	
Elizabeth Freke	1639		Dorset	Dorset History Centre	Ph.214	
Ellenor Hilley	1639	Poole	Dorset	TNA	PROB11/181/184	
Emma Clement	1639	Trowbridge	Wiltshire	TNA	PROB11/180/409	
Grace Hanford	1639	Barnstaple	Devon	TNA	PROB11/179/703	
Isabell Browne	1639	Gloucester	Gloucestershire	TNA	PROB11/179/443	
Jane Robarts	1639	Poole	Dorset	TNA	PROB11/183/260	
Johan Harmar	1639	Tewkesbury	Gloucestershire	TNA	PROB11/180/667	
Lady Anne, Vicountess Dorchester	1639	Dorchester	Dorset	TNA	PROB11/179/89	

Lucy Collier	1639	Wimborne Minster	Dorset	Dorset History Centre	Wm/W/C38	Ancestry.co.uk
Margaret Duninge	1639	Lydney	Gloucestershire	Gloucestershire Archives	223294/140	Ancestry.co.uk
Margery Jefferies	1639	Tewkesbury	Gloucestershire	Gloucestershire Archives	223296	Ancestry.co.uk
Marie Marlowe	1639	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/181/554	
Marie More/Moore	1639	Wells	Somerset	TNA	PROB11/181/670	
Mary Byrd	1639	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/180/711	
Sissely Burnoll	1639	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/179/425	
Alice Hill	1640	Bodmin	Cornwall	TNA	PROB11/184/430	
Alice Hill	1640	Bruton	Somerset	TNA	PROB11/184/430	
Anne Ingram	1640	Tewkesbury	Gloucestershire	TNA	PROB11/182/390	
Anne Stone	1640	Launceston	Cornwall	Cornwall Record Office	AP/S/870	
Anne Warre	1640	Hestercomb within Bath	Somerset	TNA	PROB11/182/224	
Anne Warren	1640	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/183/519	
Blanche Baber	1640	Aylburton	Gloucestershire	Gloucestershire Archives	223631/14	Ancestry.co.uk
Catherine Farr	1640	Hawkesbury	Gloucestershire	Gloucestershire Archives	223444	Ancestry.co.uk
Catherine Style	1640	Tewkesbury	Gloucestershire	Gloucestershire Archives	223448	Ancestry.co.uk
Elizabeth Hawkes	1640	Exeter	Devon	TNA	PROB11/182/233	
Elizabeth Jones	1640	Gloucester	Gloucestershire	TNA	PROB11/182/119	

Frances Cossworth	1640	Padstow	Cornwall	Cornwall Record Office	AP/C/1003	
Joan Pinke	1640	Gloucester	Gloucestershire	Gloucestershire Archives	223491	Ancestry.co.uk
Joane Trosse	1640	Exeter	Devon	TNA	PROB11/182/23	
Johan Willmott	1640	Exeter	Devon	TNA	PROB11/184/43	
Lucretia Potte	1640	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/184/305	
Margerie Walter	1640	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/184/312	
Mary Hobson	1640	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/183/432	
Mary Kent	1640	Devizes	Wiltshire	TNA	PROB11/183/420	
Sara Edicott	1640	Wells	Somerset	TNA	PROB11/182/416	
Sara Pitt	1640	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/182/86	
Agnes Francis	1641	Bristol	Bristol	Bristol Archives	FCW1641/1/29	
Agnes Morre	1641	Wells	Somerset	TNA	PROB11/185/355	
Anne Brigdall	1641	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/186/334	
Cahterine Westlake	1641	Barnstaple	Devon	TNA	PROB11/185/556	
Christian Haskins	1641	Bristol	Bristol	Bristol Archives	FCW1647/a/16	
Edith Eagles	1641	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/186/67	
Eleanor Hawkins	1641	Gloucester	Gloucestershire	Gloucestershire Archives	223647	Ancestry.co.uk
Elizabeth Hassard	1641	Tewkesbury	Gloucestershire	Gloucestershire Archives	223649	Ancestry.co.uk

Elizabeth Noble	1641	Westbury	Wiltshire	Wiltshire and Swindon History Cent	P251/1641/1	Ancestry.co.uk
Grace Murton	1641	Wimborne Minster	Dorset	Dorset History Centre	WM/W/N6	Ancestry.co.uk
Lucie Bolton	1641	Wimborne Minster	Dorset	Dorset History Centre	WM/W 81	Ancestry.co.uk
Margaret Dobbs	1641	Gloucester	Gloucestershire	Gloucestershire Archives	223699	Ancestry.co.uk
Margaret Hitchinge/Hitchens	1641	Yate	Gloucestershire	TNA	PROB11/185/72	
Sara Harris	1641	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/187/295	
Sarah Nethway	1641	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/186/344	
Susanna Cowles	1641	Gloucester	Gloucestershire	Gloucestershire Archives	223728	Ancestry.co.uk
Christian Halliott	1642	Poole	Dorset	TNA	PROB11/189/428	
Jane Miller	1642	Wimborne MInster	Dorset	Dorset History Centre	WM/M 38	Ancestry.co.uk
Johane Jefferies/Jeffreis	1642	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/190/96	
Joyce Horwood	1642	Hawkesbury	Gloucestershire	Gloucestershire Archives	223823	Ancestry.co.uk
Susan Sucker	1642	Lydney	Gloucestershire	Gloucestershire Archives	224385/117	Ancestry.co.uk
Ursula Beaton	1642	Gloucester	Gloucestershire	Gloucestershire Archives	223871	Ancestry.co.uk
Agnes Tom/Penhale	1643	Fowey	Cornwall	Cornwall Record Office	AP/T/722	
Joane Horlocke	1643	Studly	Wiltshire	TNA	PROB11/201/284	
Johan Willis	1643	Tewkesbury	Gloucestershire	TNA	PROB11/190/358	
Alice Kay	1644	Tewkesbury	Gloucestershire	Gloucestershire Archives	224006	Ancestry.co.uk

Elizabeth Ditson	1644	Tewkesbury	Gloucestershire	Gloucestershire Archives	224018	Ancestry.co.uk
Isabel Field	1644	Gloucester	Gloucestershire	Gloucestershire Archives	224033	Ancestry.co.uk
Joan Symons	1644	St Tudy	Cornwall	Cornwall Record Office	AP/S/945	
Katherine Kestell	1644	Fowey	Cornwall	Cornwall Record Office	AP/K/220	
Margaret Beile	1644	Saltash	Cornwall	TNA	PROB11/200/395	
Pacience Opie	1644	Bodmin	Cornwall	Cornwall Record Office	AP/O/137	
Sibil Gooman	1644	Tewkesbury	Gloucestershire	Gloucestershire Archives	224090	Ancestry.co.uk
Alice Attwood	1645	Bristol	Bristol	Bristol Archives	FCW1645/1/8	
Amy Morran	1645	Lyme Regis	Dorset	TNA	PROB11/193/519	
Anne Averie	1645	Bristol	Bristol	Bristol Archives	FCW1625/1/14	
Anne Dawe	1645	Lyme Regis	Dorset	TNA	PROB11/193/224	
Catherine Rawlins	1645	Tewkesbury	Gloucestershire	Gloucestershire Archives	224144	Ancestry.co.uk
Clement Earle	1645	Plymouth	Devon	TNA	PROB11/193/165	
Eleanor Houlder	1645	Gloucester	Gloucestershire	Gloucestershire Archives	224165	Ancestry.co.uk
Eleanor Lovelesse	1645	Weymouth and Melcomb	Dorset	TNA	PROB11/193/361	
Elianor(e) Paul	1645	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/194/198	
Elizabeth Browning	1645	Hawkesbury	Gloucestershire	Gloucestershire Archives	224167	Ancestry.co.uk
Elizabeth Lug	1645	Bristol	Bristol	Bristol Archives	FCW1645/1/6	

Jane Godwin/Godwyn	1645	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/194/401	
Joan Bubb	1645	Gloucester	Gloucestershire	Gloucestershire Archives	224201	Ancestry.co.uk
Margery Baughan	1645	Tewkesbury	Gloucestershire	Gloucestershire Archives	224218	Ancestry.co.uk
Mary Band	1645	Lyme Regis	Dorset	TNA	PROB11/194/9	
Mary Cicell	1645	Gloucester	Gloucestershire	Gloucestershire Archives	224352	Ancestry.co.uk
Mary Higgins	1645	Tewkesbury	Gloucestershire	TNA	PROB11/193/405	
Mary Kirle	1645	Gloucester	Gloucestershire	TNA	PROB11/194/337	
Mary Nicholls	1645	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/194/474	
Mary Restall	1645	Bristol	Bristol	Bristol Archives	FCW1645	
Mary Rouch	1645	Hawkesbury	Gloucestershire	Gloucestershire Archives	224351	Ancestry.co.uk
Prudence Dorrington	1645	Bristol	Bristol	Bristol Archives	FCW1645/1/43	
Rose Cox	1645	Gloucester	Gloucestershire	Gloucestershire Archives	224326	Ancestry.co.uk
Sarah Browne	1645	Gloucester	Gloucestershire	Gloucestershire Archives	224241	Ancestry.co.uk
Susann Seward	1645	Lyme Regis	Dorset	TNA	PROB11/192/542	
Agnes Yeo	1646	Totnes	Devon	TNA	PROB11/196/120	
Agnis Piper	1646	Saltash	Cornwall	TNA	PROB11/197/343	
Alice Attwood	1646	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/195/503	
Alice Stone	1646	Bristol	Bristol	Bristol Archives	FCW1646/1/21	

Ann Boddington	1646	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/198/256	
Ann Peeters	1646	Bristol	Bristol	Bristol Archives	FCW1646/1/29	
Anne Baron	1646	Exeter	Devon	TNA	PROB11/197/208	
Christian Halliott	1646	Lyme Regis	Dorset	TNA	PROB11/195/307	
Dorcas Lord	1646	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/195/266	
Elizabeth Beak/Burke	1646	Stanton St. Bernard	Wiltshire	Wiltshire and Swindon History Cent	P1/B/325	Ancestry.co.uk
Elizabeth Hussey	1646	Okehampton	Devon	TNA	PROB11/244/230	
Elizabeth Slaughter	1646	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/196/461	
Elizabeth Stangwedge	1646	Devizes	Wiltshire	TNA	PROB11/196/322	
Gartrude Stampe	1646	Exeter	Devon	TNA	PROB11/198/76	
Grace Southwood	1646	Sidmouth	Devon	TNA	PROB11/202/617	
Isabell Parson	1646	Endellion	Cornwall	Cornwall Record Office	AP/P/911	
Joan Hodges	1646	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/195/11	
Joan Whitcombe	1646	Shepton Mallet	Somerset	TNA	PROB11/195/475	
Joane Salter	1646	Lyme Regis	Dorset	TNA	PROB11/195/329	
Mandlyn Thomas	1646	Cullompton	Devon	TNA	PROB11/196/180	
Margaret Bourne	1646	Aldbourne	Dorset	Dorset History Centre	D-HAB/B/10	
Mary Eyton	1646	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/195/527	

Mary Pope	1646	Exeter	Devon	TNA	PROB11/196/204	
Susan Attwood	1646	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/196/403	
Susan Grubb	1646	Devizes	Wiltshire	TNA	PROB11/198/370	
Susana Pride	1646	Newent	Gloucestershire	TNA	PROB11/195/43	
Agnis Stoninge	1647	Honiton	Devon	TNA	PROB11/200/53	
Agns Macomber	1647	Exeter	Devon	TNA	PROB11/198/77	
Alice Vigurs	1647	Exeter	Devon	TNA	PROB11/202/231	
Amye Horwood	1647	Barnstaple	Devon	TNA	PROB11/199/209	
Ann Goninge	1647	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/203/2	
Ann Madlyng	1647	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/200/508	
Ann Price	1647	Gloucester	Gloucestershire	TNA	PROB11/200/613	
Blanch Yeomans	1647	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/201/332	
Bridgett Atkins	1647	Chippenham	Wiltshire	TNA	PROB11/200/102	
Catherine Butt	1647	Gloucester	Gloucestershire	Gloucestershire Archives	224443	Ancestry.co.uk
Cecill Shuttleworth	1647	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/201/689	
Dorcas Bradstocke	1647	Witchampton	Dorset	Dorset History Centre	D-CRI/A/43/1/7	
Edith Lane	1647	Cheltenham	Gloucestershire	TNA	PROB11/202/605	
Elizabeth Bradford	1647	Tewkesbury	Gloucestershire	TNA	PROB11/200/528	

Elizabeth Growden	1647	Grampound Borough, Cre	Cornwall	Cornwall Record Office	AP/G/589	
Grase Dolmands/Dolman	1647	Honiton	Devon	TNA	PROB11/200/119	
Hester Robbinson/Robinson	1647	Gloucester	Gloucestershire	TNA	PROB11/199/576	
Joan Horlocke	1647	Trowbridge	Wiltshire	TNA	PROB10/642/40	
Joan Parker	1647	Street	Somerset	TNA	PROB11/202/480	
Katherine Downer	1647	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/201/331	
Margaret Hill	1647	Taunton	Somerset	TNA	PROB11/200/268	
Mary Batten	1647	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/202/276	
Mary Carter	1647	Gloucester	Gloucestershire	Gloucestershire Archives	224528	Ancestry.co.uk
Mary Clapham	1647	Barnstaple	Devon	TNA	PROB11/201/277	
Mary Collier/Cllyer	1647	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/201/602	
Mary Meredith	1647	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/201/216	
Mary Ricroft	1647	Exeter	Devon	TNA	PROB11/201/411	
Mary Smith	1647	Barnstaple	Devon	TNA	PROB11/201/608	
Mary Witheridge/Withridge	1647	Barnstaple	Devon	TNA	PROB11/201/136	
Sapience Edney	1647	Devizes	Wiltshire	TNA	PROB11/200/592	
Sarah Tanner	1647	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/201/276	
Susan Horton	1647	Devizes	Wiltshire	TNA	PROB11/200/121	

Urcella Colleton	1647	Exeter	Devon	TNA	PROB11/201/621	
Dorothy Whitton	1648	Corfe Castle	Dorset	Dorset History Centre	Cc/l 283	Ancestry.co.uk
Ann Driver	1648	Tewkesbury	Gloucestershire	Gloucestershire Archives	224615	Ancestry.co.uk
Edith Curleton/Charleton	1648	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/206/327	
Elenor Smyth	1648	Gorran	Cornwall	Cornwall Record Office	AP/S/1023	
Elizabeth Smythsend	1648	Tewkesbury	Gloucestershire	Gloucestershire Archives	223936	Ancestry.co.uk
Grace Wellington	1648	Luxulyan	Cornwall	Cornwall Record Office	AP/W/819	
Hester Lane	1648	Gloucester	Gloucestershire	TNA	PROB11/206/228	
Isabel Morry	1648	Tewkesbury	Gloucestershire	Gloucestershire Archives	224659	Ancestry.co.uk
Margaret Wallis	1648	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/205/57	
Ursula Ashworth	1648	Exeter	Devon	TNA	PROB11/204/216	
Alice Attwood	1649	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/208/748	
Alice Tayler/Devonsheire	1649	Minehead	Somerset	TNA	PROB11/207/446	
Annie Whittie	1649	Sidmouth	Devon	TNA	PROB11/207/314	
Elizabeth Crumwell	1649	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/208/384	
Elizabeth Harris	1649	Barnstaple	Devon	TNA	PROB11/207/224	
Grace Case	1649	Lyme Regis	Dorset	TNA	PROB11/207/657	
Jaquett Cole	1649	Kingston	Somerset	TNA	PROB11/208/35	

Joane Sampson	1649	Bruton	Somerset	TNA	PROB11/208/603	
Margaret Davie	1649	Barnstaple	Devon	TNA	PROB11/210/164	
Margery Brookebank	1649	Gloucester	Gloucestershire	Gloucestershire Archives	224796	Ancestry.co.uk
Marie Bragg	1649	Lyme Regis	Dorset	TNA	PROB11/209/173	
Prudence Tyson	1649	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/210/210	
Alice Knight	1650	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/214/738	
Alice Yarneton	1650	Cheltenham	Gloucestershire	TNA	PROB11/214/469	
Dorothy Child	1650	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/300/138	
Elizabeth Barnes	1650	Wimborne MInster	Dorset	Dorset History Centre	Wm/W/19	Ancestry.co.uk
Elizabeth Cooke	1650	Gloucester	Gloucestershire	TNA	PROB11/228/1	
Elizabeth Jurdain	1650	Exeter	Devon	TNA	PROB11/211/638	
Elizabeth Richards	1650	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/214/31	
Jane Bryant	1650	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/212/211	
Joane Bull	1650	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/213/562	
Joane Squirrell/Squirell	1650	Minehead	Somerset	TNA	PROB11/214/645	
Katherine Bawden	1650	Okehampton	Devon	TNA	PROB11/214/770	
Margaret Hobbs	1650	South Molton	Devon	TNA	PROB11/211/834	
Margarett Russell	1650	Dorchester	Dorset	TNA	PROB11/212/799	

Mary Bond	1650	Chippenham	Wiltshire	TNA	PROB11/214/417	
Sarah Herder	1650	South Molton	Devon	TNA	PROB11/211/66	
Susan Cole	1650	Barnstaple	Devon	TNA	PROB11/211/287	
Alice Woodinton	1651	Gloucester	Gloucestershire	TNA	PROB11/218/547	
Ann Fossett	1651	Tewkesbury	Gloucestershire	Gloucestershire Archives	203298	Ancestry.co.uk
Ann Stoodlight	1651	Newton Abbot	Devon	TNA	PROB11/219/814	
Anne White	1651	Bristol	Bristol	Bristol Archives	FCW1651-57/31,32,33	
Edith Button	1651	Taunton	Somerset	TNA	PROB11/215/619	
Edith Hulbert	1651	Kingsbrook, Chippenham	Wiltshire	TNA	PROB11/217/331	
Eleanor Kennycott	1651	Dorchester	Dorset	Dorset History Centre	D-CRI/A/33/3/14	
Joan(ne) Eaton	1651	Bristol	Bristol	Bristol Archives	FCW1651-7/1/21	
Joane Baunton	1651	Devizes	Wiltshire	TNA	PROB11/219/447	
Joice Charlton	1651	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/215/739	
Marha Hurt	1651	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/219/159	
Martha Warford	1651	Wells	Somerset	TNA	PROB11/217/473	
Mary Goslett	1651	Gloucester	Gloucestershire	TNA	PROB11/217/714	
Susan Tray	1651	Gloucester	Gloucestershire	TNA	PROB11/217/5	
Alice Kindon	1652	Wells	Somerset	TNA	PROB11/224/658	

Ann Pinn	1652	Plymouth	Devon	TNA	PROB11/221/536
Anne Davis	1652	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/221/335
Christian Albin	1652	Bruton	Somerset	TNA	PROB11/220/276
Christian Neale	1652	Yate	Gloucestershire	TNA	PROB11/146/158
Christian Paul	1652	Minehead	Somerset	TNA	PROB11/220/450
Elizabeth Pomeroy	1652	Newton Abbot	Devon	TNA	PROB11/220/719
Jane Blake	1652	Padstow	Cornwall	TNA	PROB11/224/73
Julian Stibbins	1652	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/220/702
Lucie Reynell	1652	Ford, Newton Abbott	Devon	TNA	PROB11/221/737
Mary Morgan	1652	Plymouth	Devon	TNA	PROB11/220/789
Alice Lawrence	1653	Affpuddle	Dorset	Dorset History Centre	Ph.279
Amye Gough	1653	Sidmouth	Devon	TNA	PROB11/231/678
Ann Pepwell	1653	Padstow	Cornwall	TNA	PROB11/228/244
Anne Hancock	1653	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/228/537
Elizabeth Bauldwin	1653	Gloucester	Gloucestershire	TNA	PROB11/228/123
Elizabeth Costen	1653	Lanteglos by Fowey	Cornwall	TNA	PROB11/228/5
Ellinor Clarke	1653	Hawkesbury	Gloucestershire	TNA	PROB11/228/268
Joane Hoskins	1653	Wells	Somerset	TNA	PROB11/228/232

Johan Deeble	1653	Plymouth	Devon	TNA	PROB11/231/656
Margery Price	1653	Gloucester	Gloucestershire	TNA	PROB11/228/66
Margery Ware	1653	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/236/12
Mary Trowse	1653	Wells	Somerset	TNA	PROB11/231/265
Mary Yate	1653	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/228/20
Sara Bowerman	1653	Wells	Somerset	TNA	PROB11/228/379
Susanna Galehouse	1653	Bruton	Somerset	TNA	PROB11/228/514
Anne Burnoll	1654	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/242/370
Anne Pace	1654	Newent	Gloucestershire	TNA	PROB11/243/380
Anne Webb	1654	Wotton-Under-Edge	Gloucestershire	TNA	PROB11/242/136
Anne Woolfe	1654	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/239/439
Elizabeth Reynold	1654	Okeford Fitzpaine	Dorset	Dorset History Centre	Ph.783
Elizabeth White/Mussell	1654	East Looe	Cornwall	TNA	PROB11/237/645
Em Symons	1654	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/242/212
Isabell Cooke	1654	Gloucester	Gloucestershire	TNA	PROB11/235/328
Jane Bower/Bowee	1654	Wells	Somerset	TNA	PROB11/236/340
Jane Hicks	1654	East Looe	Cornwall	TNA	PROB11/244/547
Jane Middleton	1654	Bideford	Devon	TNA	PROB11/233/483

Joane Marsh(e)	1654	Padstow	Cornwall	TNA	PROB11/233/242
Joane Messenger	1654	Gloucester	Gloucestershire	TNA	PROB11/235/304
Joane Stocke	1654	Wotton-Under-Edge	Gloucestershire	TNA	PROB11/242/130
Joane Whitting	1654	Shepton Mallet	Somerset	TNA	PROB11/241/262
Johane Stone	1654	Okehampton	Devon	TNA	PROB11/233/380
Johane Trimble/Vivian	1654	Tavistock	Devon	TNA	PROB11/233/289
Johane Wolridg	1654	Plymouth	Devon	TNA	PROB11/240/296
Marie Birkin	1654	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/241/279
Marie Creswicke	1654	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/241/360
Martha Tomlinson	1654	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/242/307
Mary Butcher	1654	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/242/11
Mary Francis	1654	South Molton	Devon	TNA	PROB11/233/312
Mary Hawkins	1654	Chippenham	Wiltshire	TNA	PROB11/236/236
Mary Heywood	1654	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/237/326
Mary Jacob	1654	Tavistock	Devon	TNA	PROB11/233/359
Mary Martin	1654	Weymouth and Melcomb	Dorset	TNA	PROB11/235/49
Mary Messenger	1654	Gloucester	Gloucestershire	TNA	PROB11/243/373
Mary Salsbury	1654	Minehead	Somerset	TNA	PROB11/241/546

Susan Dennis	1654	Yeovil	Somerset	TNA	PROB11/236/336
Susann Robinson	1654	Yeovil	Somerset	TNA	PROB11/242/362
Thomasin Harrington	1654	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/235/427
Welthian Goodyear/Goodiar	1654	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/241/693
Agnes Jenings	1655	Yeovil	Somerset	TNA	PROB11/249/307
Alice Lane	1655	Yeovil	Somerset	TNA	PROB11/250/343
Alice Libery	1655	Dorchester	Dorset	TNA	PROB11/245/515
Alice Punchard	1655	South Molton	Devon	TNA	PROB11/250/259
Anne Bond	1655	Chippenham	Wiltshire	TNA	PROB11/244/161
Anne Hurt	1655	Dorchester	Dorset	TNA	PROB11/245/86
Anne Sertayne/Sertaine	1655	Trowbridge	Wiltshire	TNA	PROB11/251/595
Anne Sparrow(e)	1655	Yeovil	Somerset	TNA	PROB11/247/703
Anne White	1655	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/250/137
Blanch Squibb	1655	Truro	Cornwall	TNA	PROB11/251/370
Dorothy Dennis	1655	Gloucester	Gloucestershire	TNA	PROB11/246/331
Edith Philpe	1655	Tintagel	Cornwall	TNA	PROB11/246/412
Edith Philpe	1655	Tintagel	Cornwall	TNA	PROB11/246/412
Eliabeth Coxe/Cos	1655	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/251/731

Elizabeth Kennycot	1655	Totnes	Devon	TNA	PROB11/246/465
Elizabeth Pickett	1655	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/251/190
Emme Beare	1655	Saltash	Cornwall	TNA	PROB11/248/296
Jane Siddenhone/Siddenham	1655	Truro	Cornwall	TNA	PROB11/250/201
Jane Tinke/Tinek	1655	Tintagel	Cornwall	TNA	PROB11/245/320
Joane Cary	1655	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/237/701
Joane Chaldon	1655	Barnstaple	Devon	TNA	PROB11/250/334
Julyan Doidge	1655	Tavistock	Devon	TNA	PROB11/244/270
Katherine Carpenter	1655	Barnstaple	Devon	TNA	PROB11/247/235
Lettice Hawkes	1655	Barnstaple	Devon	TNA	PROB11/251/450
Marie Pearce	1655	Taunton	Somerset	TNA	PROB11/244/345
Mary Tayler	1655	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/246/74
Mawde Dawe	1655	Wotton-Under-Edge	Gloucestershire	TNA	PROB11/247/701
Mellis Jennings	1655	Yeovil	Somerset	TNA	PROB11/249/305
Sarah Evered	1655	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/246/343
Susan Coliber	1655	Barnstaple	Devon	TNA	PROB11/245/460
Susanna Smale	1655	Bideford	Devon	TNA	PROB11/250/526
Thomasin Heash	1655	Wells	Somerset	TNA	PROB11/247/7o9

Wilmote Wise	1655	Totnes	Devon	TNA	PROB11/244/91
Ann Delbridge	1656	Barnstaple	Devon	TNA	PROB11/259/299
Ann(e) Booth	1656	Tavistock	Devon	TNA	PROB11/260/483
Ann(e) Larramy/Laramy	1656	Barnstaple	Devon	TNA	PROB11/254/416
Anne Goddard	1656	Swindon	Wiltshire	TNA	PROB11/255/321
Bennett Ford	1656	Honiton	Devon	TNA	PROB11/260/582
Bridgett Mahatt	1656	Wells	Somerset	TNA	PROB11/252/79
Elinor Cornish	1656	Tavistock	Devon	TNA	PROB11/254/587
Elizabeth Bagidge	1656	Cullompton	Devon	TNA	PROB11/252/18
Elizabeth Banester	1656	Cheltenham	Gloucestershire	TNA	PROB11/253/388
Elizabeth Gamon	1656	Dorchester	Dorset	TNA	PROB11/252/392
Elizabeth Hounsell	1656	Lyme Regis	Dorset	TNA	PROB11/260/613
Elizabeth Nicholls	1656	Cheltenham	Gloucestershire	TNA	PROB11/258/483
Fortune Southbye	1656	Chipping Sodbury	Gloucestershire	TNA	PROB11/259/515
Jane Edmonds	1656	Truro	Cornwall	TNA	PROB11/258/306
Jane Turner	1656	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/255/336
Joane Baylie	1656	Weymouth and Melcomb	Dorset	TNA	PROB11/258/294
Joane Crellocke/Crellock	1656	Bideford	Devon	TNA	PROB11/259/479

Joane Parson	1656	Bideford	Devon	TNA	PROB11/258/539
Jonn/Joan Dunn	1656	Stroud	Gloucestershire	TNA	PROB11/259/447
Katherine Chaundler	1656	Gloucester	Gloucestershire	TNA	PROB11/253/225
Katherine Crispe	1656	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/254/171
Katherine Merchant	1656	Yeovil	Somerset	TNA	PROB11/247/733
Margarett Sinett	1656	Chippenham	Wiltshire	TNA	PROB11/257/236
Margarett Stapledon	1656	Bideford	Devon	TNA	PROB11/256/112
Margerie Lindesay Walter	1656	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/257/73
Martha Browne	1656	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/252/388
Mary Collinge	1656	Plymouth	Devon	TNA	PROB11/257/441
Maud Hobb	1656	Bodmin	Devon	TNA	PROB11/252/441
Petronell Cade	1656	Fowey	Cornwall	TNA	PROB11/253/616
Ruth Stubbs	1656	Cheltenham	Gloucestershire	TNA	PROB11/253/418
Sara Tabor	1656	Wells	Somerset	TNA	PROB11/252/264
Agnes Paine	1657	Wells	Somerset	TNA	PROB11/268/534
Alice Price	1657	Gloucester	Gloucestershire	TNA	PROB11/264/52
Alice Smith/Smyth	1657	Lydney	Gloucestershire	TNA	PROB11/270/432
Andrie Edgecombe	1657	Tavistock	Devon	TNA	PROB11/262/35

Anne Colston	1657	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/265/282
Anne George	1657	Tewkesbury	Gloucestershire	TNA	PROB11/264/317
Anne Strode	1657	Shepton Mallet	Somerset	TNA	PROB11/267/346
Christian Merefeild/Merrifeild	1657	Cullompton	Devon	TNA	PROB11/264/21
Damaras Moggs	1657	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/261/540
Elinor Avery	1657	Truro	Cornwall	TNA	PROB11/263/331
Elizabeth Bull	1657	Wells	Somerset	TNA	PROB11/264/48
Elizabeth Davie/Davies	1657	Dorchester	Dorset	TNA	PROB11/268/458
Elizabeth Edgcombe	1657	Tavistock	Devon	TNA	PROB11/269/74
Elizabeth Paige	1657	Barnstaple	Devon	TNA	PROB11/266/167
Elizabeth Welsteed	1657	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/270/13
Joane Green	1657	Gloucester	Gloucestershire	TNA	PROB11/271/572
Joane Search	1657	Lydney	Gloucestershire	TNA	PROB11/270/64
Katharine Rodman/Taylor	1657	Hillesley	Gloucestershire	TNA	PROB11/287/305
Margaret Necke	1657	Newton Abbot	Devon	TNA	PROB11/266/166
Margarett Elsynge	1657	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/266/237
Margarett Harris	1657	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/264/564
Margarett Mason	1657	Gloucester	Gloucestershire	TNA	PROB11/2790/359

Margarett Pyland	1657	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/263/195
Margerie Tovey	1657	Chipping Sodbury	Gloucestershire	TNA	PROB11/270/361
Margery Hellier	1657	Devizes	Wiltshire	TNA	PROB11/265/434
Mary Elsinge	1657	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/268/417
Millesent Webb	1657	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/272/80
Sarag Debanck	1657	Dorchester	Dorset	TNA	PROB11/268/457
Susanna Steight	1657	Tewkesbury	Gloucestershire	TNA	PROB11/271/182
Thomazine Atkins	1657	Cullompton	Devon	TNA	PROB11/269/319
Welthian Williams	1657	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/262/584
Agnis Pitt	1658	Allington, Chippenham	Wiltshire	TNA	PROB11/286/70
Alice Clement	1658	Wells	Somerset	TNA	PROB11/283/54
Alice Tompson/Thompson	1658	Dorchester	Dorset	TNA	PROB11/279/46
Alice Welch	1658	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/276/273
Avice/Avise Lewse	1658	South Barton	Somerset	TNA	PROB11/284/174
Bridgett Batt	1658	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/297/136
Dorothie Gorwill	1658	Barnstaple	Devon	TNA	PROB11/273/584
Elizabeth Russell	1658	Gloucester	Gloucestershire	TNA	PROB11/276/285
Elizabeth Trosse	1658	Exeter	Devon	TNA	PROB11/285/576

Gartud Morgan	1658	Wells	Somerset	TNA	PROB11/273/444
Jane Sanford	1658	Minehead	Somerset	TNA	PROB11/280/51
Jane Thurman	1658	Devizes	Wiltshire	TNA	PROB11/277/470
Joane Meire	1658	Minehead	Somerset	TNA	PROB11/274/106
Joane Taylor	1658	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/278/295
Julian Perkins	1658	Dorchester	Dorset	Tna	PROB11/273/28
Katherine Leeves	1658	Yeovil	Somerset	TNA	PROB11/279/64
Margaret Hammond/Hamond	1658	Lydney	Gloucestershire	TNA	PROB11/284/264
Mary Alsopp	1658	Plymouth	Devon	TNA	PROB11/276/164
Mary Collins	1658	Tewkesbury	Gloucestershire	TNA	PROB11/272/289
Mary Cutts	1658	Gloucester	Gloucestershire	TNA	PROB11/273/136
Mary Davis	1658	Tewkesbury	Gloucestershire	TNA	PROB11/280/399
Mary Heaman	1658	Bideford	Devon	TNA	PROB11/285/47
Sarah Tooker	1658	Barnstaple	Devon	TNA	PROB11/284/146
Sibella Poulstagg	1658	Bodmin	Devon	TNA	PROB11/273/138
Wilmott Hoskin	1658	Plymouth	Devon	TNA	PROB11/276/165
Agnes Maynerd	1659	Totnes	Devon	TNA	PROB11/291/270
Elianor Toney	1659	Tewkesbury	Gloucestershire	TNA	PROB11/290/352

Elizabeth Hawkins	1659	Chippenham	Wiltshire	TNA	PROB11/292/179
Elizabeth Oaker	1659	Wells	Somerset	TNA	PROB11/291/200
Elizabeth Pentyer	1659	Plymouth	Devon	TNA	PROB11/292/36
Jane Tovie	1659	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/296/207
Joane Glover	1659	Chippenham	Wiltshire	TNA	PROB11/294/584
Joane Johns	1659	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/292/263
Joane Lloyde	1659	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/286/200
Joane Salterne	1659	Bideford	Devon	TNA	PROB11/288/475
Johan/Joan Vennor	1659	Barnstaple	Devon	TNA	PROB11/288/384
Johan/Joane Underhill	1659	Gloucester	Gloucestershire	TNA	PROB11/293/625
Johane/Joane Hackwill	1659	Barnstaple	Devon	TNA	PROB11/296/111
Joyce Wilson	1659	Tewkesbury	Gloucestershire	TNA	PROB11/291/639
Luce Halfe/Diker	1659	Puddletown	Dorset	TNA	PROB11/287/103
Margaret Morgan	1659	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/292/622
Margaret Paynter	1659	Gloucester	Gloucestershire	TNA	PROB11/291/187
Margarett Daniell	1659	Truro	Cornwall	TNA	PROB11/294/677
Margarett Flower	1659	Devizes	Wiltshire	TNA	PROB11/295/448
Mary Creese	1659	Plymouth	Devon	TNA	PROB11/293/210

Mary Hort	1659	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/295/660	
Mary Rennolds/Renools	1659	Newton Abbot	Devon	TNA	PROB11/289/344	
Mary Staunton	1659	Gloucester	Gloucestershire	TNA	PROB11/296/18	
Sarah Owen	1659	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/292/514	
Sarah Russell	1659	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/291/331	
Thomasin Neblett	1659	Wells	Somerset	TNA	PROB11/295/41	
Ursula Dyer	1659	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/287/316	
Agnes Blackler	1660	Totnes	Devon	TNA	PROB11/301/398	
Alice Heathfield	1660	Cullompton	Devon	TNA	PROB11/297/331	
Anne Cole	1660	Dorchester	Dorset	TNA	PROB11/299/346	
Dinah Longhorne	1660	Newlyn	Cornwall	TNA	PROB11/298/102	
Elizabeth Sumpter	1660	Cullompton	Devon	TNA	PROB11/301/205	
Frances Morgan	1660	Wells	Somerset	TNA	PROB11/199/479	
Hanna Clarke	1660	Bristol	Bristol	TNA	PROB11/299/738	
Hester Powell	1660	Tewkesbury	Gloucestershire	TNA	PROB11/301/124	
Joan Beale	1660	Gloucester	Gloucestershire	Gloucestershire Archives	225622	Ancestry.co.uk
Katherine Reynolds	1660	Corfe Castle	Dorset	Dorset History Centre	D-BOC/889/Box2/B5	
Susanna Gorrell	1660	Barnstaple	Devon	TNA	PROB11/301/636	

Arundell Penruddock	1667	Compton Chamberlayne	Wiltshire	TNA	PROB11/323/235	
Jane Penruddock	1671	Stratton	Dorset	TNA	PROB11/335/444	
Sarah Penruddock	1695	Kipworth	Gloucestershire	TNA	PROB11/427/188	
Elizabeth Smallwell	undated	Wimborne Minster	Dorset	Dorset History Centre	WM/W/S19	Ancestry.co.uk

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